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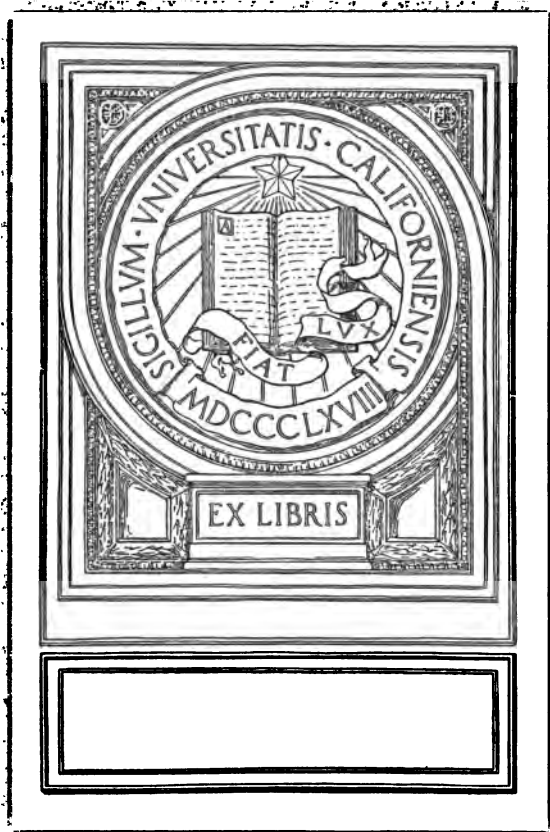
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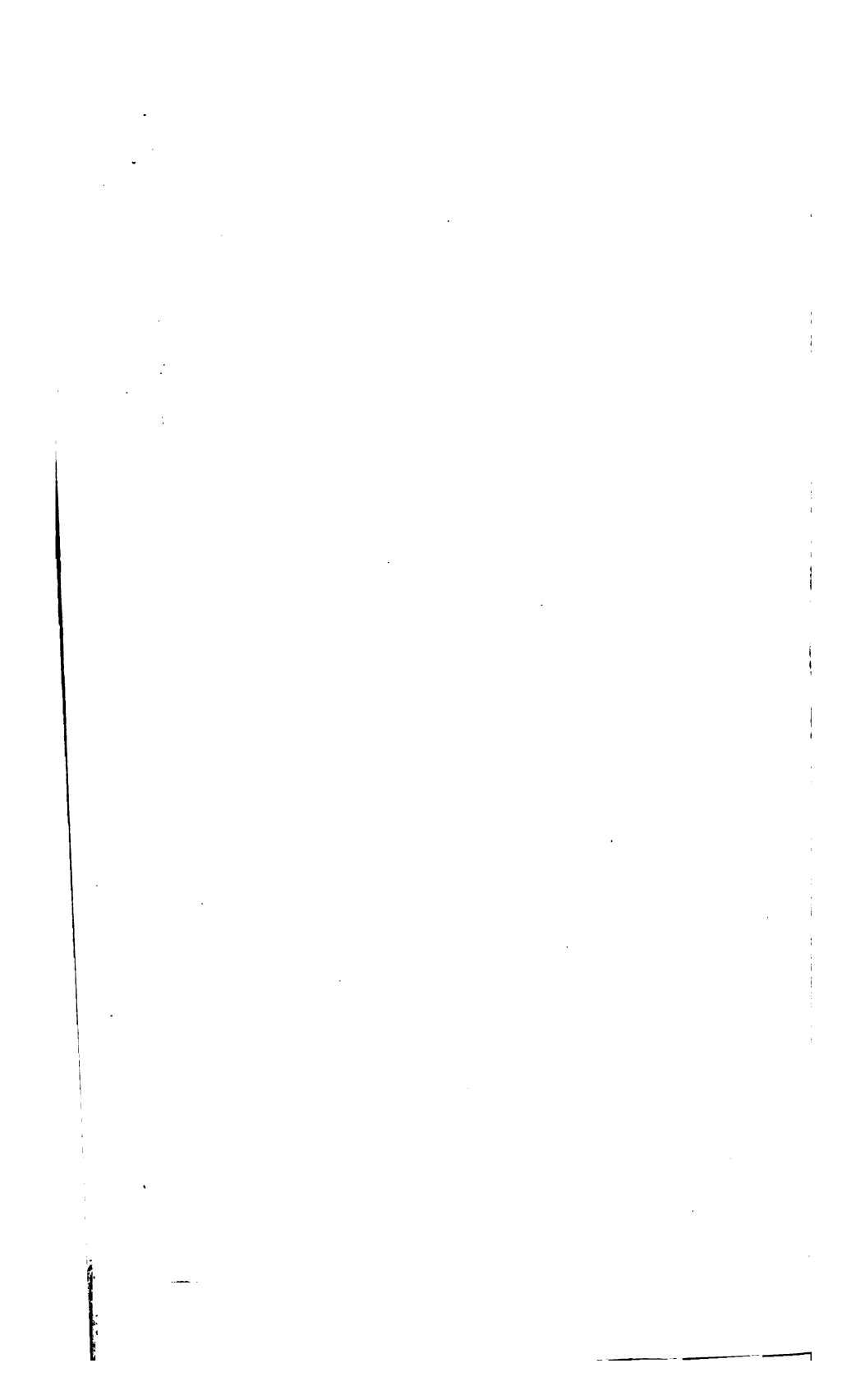
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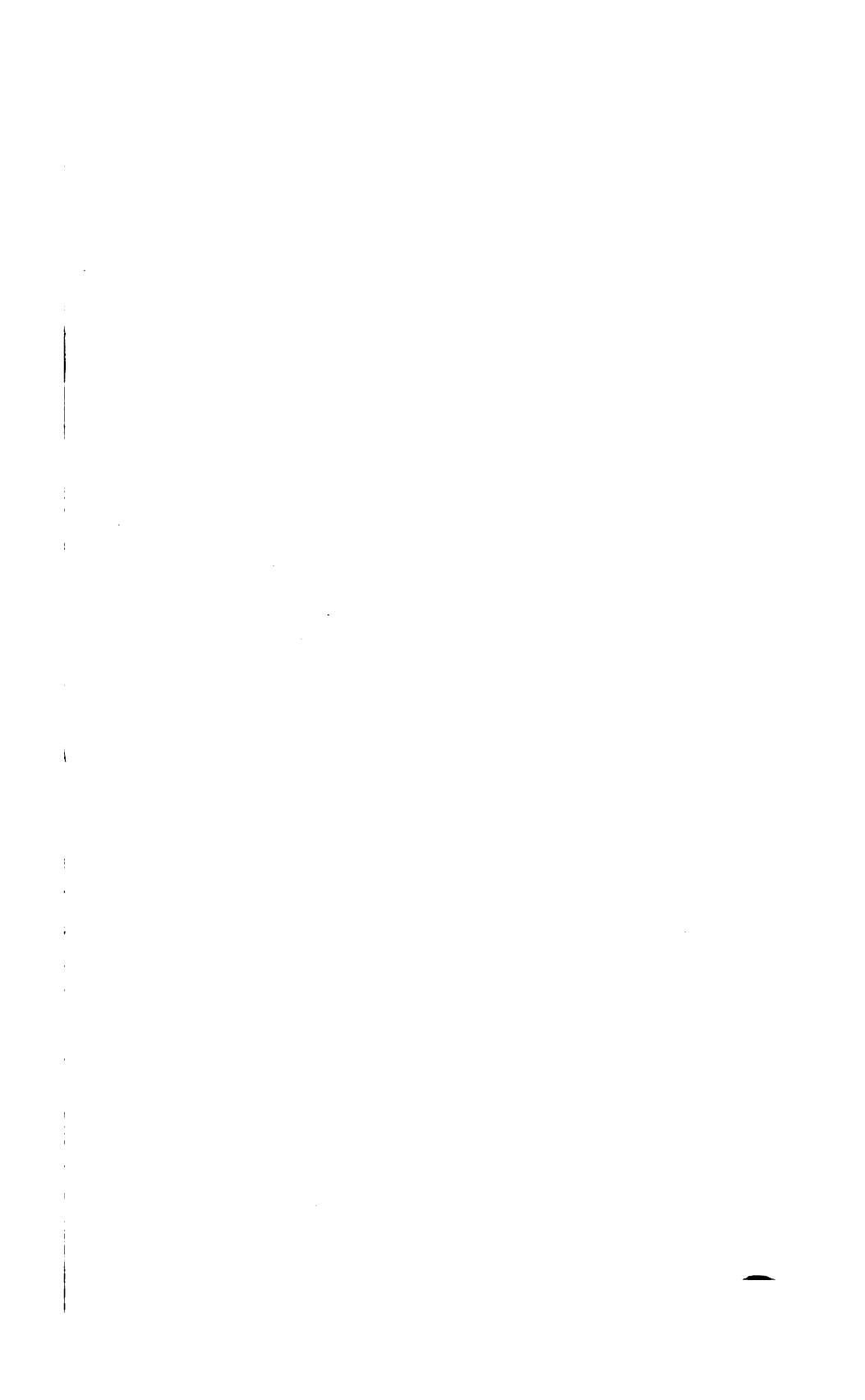
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RECOLLECTIONS
OF A
SERVICE OF THREE YEARS
DURING THE
WAR-OF-EXTERMINATION
IN THE REPUBLICS OF
VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA.

BY
AN OFFICER OF THE COLOMBIAN NAVY.

"MOVING ACCIDENTS BY FLOOD AND FIELD."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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LONDON:
HUNT AND CLARKE,
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RECOLLECTIONS

OF

A THREE YEARS' SERVICE,

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CHAPTER I.

Second interview with the President Bolivar—His anxiety in relation to the Generals Urdenetta and Arismendez—His determination to visit Angostura in person—Embarkation for that Capital attended by the Author—Voyage down the Orinoco—Depotment and manners of the President—His unerring precision as a marksman—Numerous alligators—The use they make of stones—The River Orinoco—Snakes on its banks—Arrival at Garjoe—Surprised by the Spaniards, who set fire to the town—Great peril of the President and the Author—Their critical escape and subsequent rencontre of the party with the Spaniards—Conduct and treatment of the Indian crew—Arrival at Angostura—Dangerous joke practised upon the Author.

I ATTENDED the Libertador early in the morning in conformity with the orders I had received the preceding day, and found him employed in dictating the answers to my despatches in the same situation as I had seen him in the day before.

When they were finished he ordered breakfast, which he invited me to partake with him alone, and I remarked that he seemed particularly uneasy and restless. I am thus particular, because, as will be hereafter seen, these minutiae are somewhat connected with other subsequent events of great importance to the Republic. Having perused the letters over and over which I had delivered him from Arismendez, he pressed me closely upon two points: how General Arismendez was personally disposed towards him, and why Urdenetta was removed from the situation of general of the division sent against Barcelona. He observed, that as the General seemed very solicitous to ensure my promotion, I was doubtless in his confidence, and informed me that it would be much to my future advantage to answer him without hesitation or concealment.

I replied, that I had not the honour of General Arismendez's confidence so unreservedly as his Excellency appeared to suppose; but I was firmly convinced that the General entertained for him every sentiment of respect as the Chief of the Republic, and every regard for his interests, which from his situation were so necessarily embodied with those of his country. As regarded the dismissal of General Urdenetta, I observed, that the reports I had delivered to him of the military investigation of the conduct of that leader at

Barcelona and Cumana, would more correctly and satisfactorily than it was in my power to do, describe the cause of his removal, which was not the individual act of Arismendez, but only sanctioned by him in his capacity as Vice-president of the Congress. He then said, you were on the spot; read the report, and tell me if it is correct. I did so, and answered that it was. He ruminated for some time, and seemed lost in the intensity of his thoughts, and as if unconscious of being near any person, observed, "he must be replaced"—meaning, as I presume, General Urdenetta.

He afterwards desired me to inform him as far as I could of the operations of the next campaign of the British legion, which I did; and in the end he dismissed me very flatteringly, giving me the despatches, and one hundred dollars to defray any additional expenses I might have to incur, and shook me by the hand with the same warmth and condescension as before.

After taking leave of Colonel Mardyn I set out for the banks of the Oronoco, whither a courier had been despatched to provide me with a canoe. I found it preparing, and until it was completed I staid at the house of one of the members of the late New Grenadian Congress, to take some refreshment. I had not been long there when a courier came dashing up to the beach to inquire of

the Indians he saw about the canoe, whether I had started. Being directed to the house where I was, he gave me a letter from Bolivar, commanding me to wait until his Excellency joined me, as he had come to the determination of returning to Angostura himself, instead of writing. In about three hours he arrived, and orders were immediately given for a canoe of the largest class to be prepared for his conveyance. He desired me to give up the despatches, and to attend him in a short walk while the boat was got ready. During the ramble, he questioned me as to the popular opinion in Venezuela of the government and military capabilities of Arismendez, and if the people admired him? I answered, that the manner in which I had been constantly employed since my arrival in the country, did not allow me to learn the opinions of the people. We then returned to the banks of the river, and went on board with Colonel O'Leary, a young native officer, Lieutenant Pornandez, and the crew, our servants, and baggage. In this comfortless conveyance, great part of which was taken up by a cot slung for his Excellency's convenience, above thirty persons ate and reposed during the voyage, excepting on fine days, when we sometimes went on shore to breakfast and dine, and to take a siesta.* When-

* A sleep generally enjoyed during the hottest part of the day.

ever his Excellency went ashore, he invariably invited me to share these repasts with him, and sometimes exclusively so, that he might have a better opportunity of questioning me upon any point he wished to be made known to him concerning the affairs of Venezuela. At a very stage of the voyage I thought I could perceive that the government of my patron, General Arismendez, would be of short duration, and my situation was one of extreme delicacy and difficulty, as I was unceasingly interrogated as to his intentions, dispositions, and the objects he had in view, by pursuing the line of conduct he had marked out for himself. General Marino also seemed likely to share the same fate, as Bolivar did not hesitate to say, that he would rather any other officer in the country had the command of the troops during his absence than him. Our meals generally consisted of dried beef or tassao, plantains, biscuit, wine, and London bottled porter, of which last Bolivar is remarkably fond, and had a good store with him. After refreshing himself with these he would immerse himself in cold spring water for some time, and when he had re-dressed himself, apply wet cloths to his head for several minutes, which is a favourite custom with him. When we took our meals ashore, he would not unfrequently amuse and exercise himself by going into the woods after dinner, to shoot

a few small birds; and he is decidedly the best shot I ever saw. I have never seen him miss a single bird, although he has brought down at least two hundred in my presence.

These little excursions over, he would very rarely indulge himself with a cigar, but this is a practice in which he seldom indulges, nor is he prone to drinking to an excess. His habits in this respect are usually of an abstemious nature, owing, as is generally believed, to the alarming effect which excitement of such a nature has upon him. He has been upon some occasions delirious for days, and his faculties suffer severely after similar acts of indiscretion.

Our progress during the first four days was unvaried by any kind of incident or accident; and as the President was nearly all the time either asleep, or deeply involved in his reflections, from which neither of our companions cared to arouse him, our time was passed in as dull a manner as could be imagined. The scenery on either side of the Oronoco during this part of our journey was not calculated to afford pleasure, as it was nearly a level, unornamented with anything to attract the eye. There were hundreds of my old acquaintances the alligators, who were usually to be seen lying on the top of the water with their mouths open, ever and anon closing them with a horrible crash upon some luckless fish,

which the force of the current had conveyed into them. In the course of the voyage I had an opportunity of ascertaining a fact concerning these creatures, which I do not recollect to have observed in the natural history of them. The Indians told me that, previously to their going in search of prey, they always swallow a stone; that, by the additional weight of it, they may be enabled to dive with the greater celerity, and drag whatever they may seize under the water with them with ease. They have frequently been known on this river, where they are exceedingly large and rapacious, to draw men and horses in an instant out of sight. Not giving implicit credit to this statement of the Indians, I determined to ascertain if it were true, and mentioned my intention to his Excellency, who assured me the Indians were correct; and, for the sake of amusement, consented to shoot some to convince me. The only parts where they are vulnerable to musket-shot, are on the dirty white part of the skin along the chest and abdomen, and in a space of about three inches in breadth behind each ear. The former can seldom be aimed at, and we therefore tried at the latter. Bolivar, whose aim was certain, shot and killed several with a rifle, in all of which, when opened, were found stones, varying in weight according to the size of the animal. The largest killed was about seventeen

feet in length, and had within him a stone weighing about sixty or seventy pounds. The Indians, whose occupation obliged them to be always on the river, or close to its banks, said, that they have frequently observed the young ones in the mornings swallowing small stones at the side, under the shelter of the wood, before they searched for their victims, and depositing them at night in a place of safety.

I have never seen this myself, nor have I ever met with any person but the Indians who have asserted that they have; and I have sometimes doubted whether these calculi are not secreted in the stomach. The alligators are very obstinate, and would never move out of the way of the canoe, unless the crew made a tremendous shouting, which, when there was a great number of them, they preferred doing, to avoiding them by steering in another direction. They told us that small canoes had been upset by these creatures; which is not very improbable, as they are of so slight a construction as to render capsizement a very easy matter.

The river Oronoco is supposed to be the deepest and most extensive in the world. It varies in breadth according to the situation. At Angostura, which is the narrowest and most shallow part, it is above a mile and a half across, and has upwards of one hundred and twenty fathoms water. Though above three hundred miles from the sea, the cur-

rent is here at all times extremely strong and rapid; but in the rainy season its velocity is amazing, and its rise very great. At the capital, it has been known to rise above one hundred feet above its ordinary level at these periods. Consequently, during the wet seasons, the plains are completely inundated, and the cattle are forced to seek the more mountainous parts, which they occupy till the waters have subsided. From Angostura the river runs through an extent of country of more than two thousand miles, according to the computation of the natives, expanding itself into majestic branches, which meander in serpentine forms through the delightful province of Varinas, which it fertilizes, while its beautiful banks everywhere display the richest vegetation, and beyond them is seen the most enchanting and diversified scenery. Its depth on all parts of its branches is equal to any species of navigation, and on its bosom are several secure and commodious harbours.

The number of snakes which infest the banks of this majestic river exceed all idea, and many of them are very large and dangerous. Coiling themselves on the extreme ends of the protruding branches of trees, they watch a favourable opportunity of darting upon the passengers in the canoes, and, if they succeed in biting, death often ensues. The mode of passing up the river, from one port to another, is commonly in canoes which have a

toldo, and are impelled by the Indians, who sit two abreast with paddles, with considerable swiftness. When proceeding from Venezuela to New Grenada, which is termed going "upwards," they always keep near the side of the river, to avoid the force of the current; but in descending, they as sedulously preserve the midway, where they have the full benefit of its strength, by which they come down in a day and night, without labour, a distance which would occupy them three days and nights to pass in the reverse way.

On the fifth day we arrived opposite to the little town of Garjos, situated about a mile from the banks of the river, where his Excellency intended to rest for the night. We accordingly went on shore, and entered the town, which consists of a single plaza, with a fountain in the centre of it, and having two narrow streets running east and west on each side of the plaza, from which three other streets in opposite directions branch into the square. I should suppose it is about three hundred yards long and about two hundred in breadth. We found no difficulty in procuring excellent quarters, as the inhabitants were decidedly in favour of the republican interests, and the Alcalde gave his Excellency a respectful and cordial reception.

At supper our host informed us, that a party of Spaniards, under Colonel de Ries, had plundered the town of all the specie, and every other valu-

able it contained that was portable, and had driven off all the cattle only a few days before, and his party were still suspected of being in the neighbourhood. It subsequently appeared that they were close to it, and had received intelligence of Bolivar's movements; for in the night they entered Garjos, which had never before openly evinced itself so hostile to them as to entertain a republican chief, with an intention of destroying both him and it. In the latter they were but too successful, and but narrowly missed accomplishing their object with regard to the President.

We had retired to our repose, after an evening spent most agreeably with the Alcalde, who was a man of enlarged mind and liberal opinions, in the only two rooms vacant in the house; his Excellency and myself, by his desire, in one, and Colonel O'Leary and the Lieutenant in the other. The Indians had been left to sleep near the canoe, which is their common practice, and we were therefore left entirely without any guard. After midnight the Spaniards entered the town, and demanded of the principal inhabitants the person of Bolivar. They went to the Alcalde amongst the rest, who persisted in denying all knowledge of his being in the town, but refused to open his doors, and submit his house to a search. The enemy finding they were likely to lose the object of their pursuit, fixed upon the most effectual method of dislodging.

him. They at once set fire to the town, and stationed themselves at the streets leading from it, to prevent his egress. The houses being chiefly composed of wood, were not slow in consuming, and the fire communicated itself rapidly to the house we were in. His Excellency slept in his cot, which had been brought up from the canoe and slung for him, and I was enjoying a sound nap in a bed prepared for me, when I was awoke by a loud and continued rapping at the door. I opened it, and found a female servant sent by the Alcalde to apprize us of the danger, and to give us a disguise each, to assist in our escape. She had previously been to the chamber occupied by O'Leary, mistaking it for the one tenanted by Bolivar; and he, together with Porrandez, had gone out of the house.

I vainly endeavoured to arouse his Excellency to a sense of his situation. He was, from the fatigue of being in the boat, so sound asleep, as to render it a matter of doubt if I should even get him out of the house. Twenty minutes at least were taken up in the attempt; and when I had lifted him out of the cot, and had even shaken him violently, he was scarcely aware of his danger; but having a confused notion of being surrounded by the enemy, he was about to fly in the state in which he had left his bed. I stopped him, and urged the necessity of his equipping himself in the disguise the servant had pro-

vided, and of his bearing a part of the papers he had with him, and some of the dollars he had brought in bags for his use in Venezuela. I could not induce him for some time to listen to me; for while I had turned about to collect the share for him to carry, he had gone fast asleep again. The servant was too much alarmed to render much assistance, and I feared to entrust her with the papers, lest her fright should occasion the loss of them. At length, with her help, I got him dressed in the clothes of a native woman, which his figure did not ill suit, and tied a portion of what there was to carry up in a rug or counterpane, and slung it to his shoulders, and took my own share fastened up in a capote. This settled, I desired our companions to see if the way out of the house was clear; but the instant she opened the door of the room, a volume of smoke, followed quickly by flames, burst into the room. The delay which had occurred had given time for the whole of the lower part of the building to be on fire. No other chance of escape was left but that of jumping out of the window, which we did, first throwing our burdens out, and leaping upon them, at the cost of only a few contusions. The unfortunate female who had been the cause of our escape broke her arm, and otherwise so injured herself as to be unable to follow us. To carry her with our loads was impos-

sible, and we were therefore obliged, for the sake of self-preservation, to abandon her to her fate.

The whole town was by this time in a state of conflagration, and several of the streets, which were very narrow, were masses of fire, as the flames quite reached from one side to the other, and at every other outlet the Spanish cavalry were drawn up in line, lancing every individual who attempted to escape. The only way left was to rush through the fire, which his Excellency was about to do as fast as possible, when we remembered the fountain, and I requested him to allow me to dip his large capote, which I had thrown over him, in it. He did so, and having completely saturated it, with my own at the same time, we covered ourselves with them, and ran with all the speed our burthens would allow us to use, through the fire; and though our faces were much scorched and our eyebrows singed off, we managed to reach the canoe, which was lying out a few yards from the beach, with the secretary on board, who had resolved to wait for us till the last moment, in the hope of our escape. They pulled close in shore to receive us, and we got on board; but our movements had not escaped the observance of the Royalists, a party of whom had closely pursued us from the opposite street to the one we had escaped by, and had seen our precaution of wetting our cloaks

by the light which shone full on the plaza. They had to ride round the town, and, fortunately for us, did not come by the most direct way to that part of the beach where the canoe lay. They plunged into the water up to their horses' chests, and one of them, more eager than the remainder, swam his horse after the canoe, while the others stopped and fired a volley at us with their carbines, by which the poor Indians suffered severely. They were paddling with all the strength they were capable of, when several of the balls struck the gunwale of the canoe, and the splinters lacerated their naked bodies dreadfully, but only one of them was killed. Bolivar had taken the precaution of lying down in the bottom of the boat, and therefore was in little danger. Colonel O'Leary was slightly hurt by a ball grazing his temple, and the Lieutenant had his hat drilled in several places; but this was all the injury we sustained.

Meantime the Spaniard, who had spurred his horse on without mercy, never stopping to ascertain if his comrades backed him, came close up, and Pornandez, who was always inclined for frolic, said to me, "Let us pull him on board and keep him." He called to us to surrender, and we threw his lance on one side, and pulled him into the canoe by the collar, leaving the horse to swim back again if he pleased. The poor fellow was terribly frightened at the denouement of his ad-

venture, and begged earnestly for his life; but he was ordered to be given up to the Indians, who soon despatched him, after we had gained the little intelligence he could afford us. The water had now got into our boat, and we had some difficulty in baleing it out with our hats and drinking vessels, but by continued exertions we kept it under till the morning, when the leak was stopped. The Indians still writhing under the pain which their wounds created, could not be induced to proceed as fast as was consistent with our safety, and Bolivar being anxious to escape the clutches of the Royalists, urged them in a great measure beyond their strength, which loss of blood had diminished. Indeed to so great a pitch was this exertion carried, that two of them expired during the night, although we had not made near the progress we commonly did. The President wished the bodies to be thrown overboard, but this the whole crew were determined not to do, and declared that they would prefer instant death to complying with such an order. This arose from an idea of the transmigration of souls, which is prevalent among them, and the belief that all bodies thrown into the rivers or sea are changed into alligators and other rapacious monsters, who prey upon those who have so committed them to the deep, in revenge for the unnatural mode of disposing of their remains.

Finding that to oppose their inclinations would be useless, and subject us to more danger, his Excellency consented.

On landing, about our usual time of breakfast, we went into a thicket, in order to perform the funeral obsequies of the poor Indians, and accidentally fell upon one of the tracks made by the cattle through the brushwood. This being the most open spot that could be found, it was pitched upon by the crew as the burial place of their departed comrades. While they were preparing the grave, his Excellency and Colonel O'Leary, who had gone ashore for the sake of exercise, and myself, took a stroll along the path, accompanied by Pornandez, who was chaunting a ludicrous kind of funeral dirge extempore, and turning everything he saw, and all that was said, into ridicule. We were all amused by his prattle, and had walked farther than had been intended, when he suddenly ran forward a good distance without saying a word, and disappeared in the winding of the path. Bolivar now tried to shoot some birds, but as he could not find any, he was about to return to the canoe, when O'Leary remarked the absence of our companion, and we busied ourselves in conjectures respecting the cause of it. We looked in every direction through the slender openings we could find through the trees, but could not discover anything

of him. Presently one of the Indians came up breathless, and being unable from terror and exhaustion to relate the cause of his precipitancy, motioned that we were pursued by Spaniards. Assured that there could be no danger in the direction Pornandez had taken, or he would have returned to tell us of it, we concluded that they must have followed the course of the canoe along the banks during the night to wait for our landing at any place. The agitated Indian repeated his motions with increased vehemence, and several broken exclamations scarcely intelligible, and we prepared for instant combat. At this moment we saw the Lieutenant returning, leading a horse through the long winding path, with a lancer tied across the animal's back, with his head and heels downwards on each side, seemingly lifeless. Alternately looking at us and behind him with great anxiety, Pornandez soon joined us, and having motioned us to come apart from the Indian, quickly unfolded the mystery. While chattering to us he thought he saw a red plume passing among the trees, just behind us a little to the right, and determined to go on and ascertain if it were so, without mentioning his suspicions, lest he might be deceived. With that intent he sprang forward, not having observed any path through the brushwood as we had passed along, until he reached a narrow pass to the right, and along this he cautiously went for

some distance till he again caught sight of the red plume, and now no longer in doubt, he only studied how to get near enough to the wearer to bring him down without firing, as the report would have betrayed us to the enemy, who he was certain were not far from us. Advancing on his hands and knees, with his drawn sword in his mouth, he got by a cross direction into the track of the unsuspecting Spaniard, who was looking all ways but the right for the objects of his search. Here he waited till the soldier rode past him, when with one stroke he brought him to the ground, and seizing the horse, and placing the body across it, he retraced his steps to us with the same caution.

The lancer was not dead, though weakened and faint by excessive loss of blood, which had flowed in torrents from a deep gash at the back of his head. Upon being questioned, he told us that he belonged to a serjeant's guard, which was sent to scour the wood, besides which there were scouts in all directions, and a large detachment in close pursuit of us from Garjos. This was appalling intelligence to us, who, though well armed, were so inferior in numbers as to render the chance of escape hopeless. "What shall we do?" exclaimed Bolivar. "Turn loose the horse while I dispatch this fellow, that he may not disclose what he knows of us if found," said O'Leary,

“and follow me.” This done, we took the arms of the prisoner, and creeping under the thicket of the brushwood, went on in a retrograde direction, to endeavour to get back to the canoe. After proceeding for some minutes in this way, we heard the sound of voices not far from us, and the Indian, who had been kept with us in advance lest he should be taken and tell the path we had chosen, screamed with affright. This of course betrayed our situation to the enemy, and in a few seconds they were as near us as the thickness of the brushwood would allow their horses to approach. With an exclamation of triumph and joy they discharged their carbines and pistols, but, as we were still well sheltered, without hitting any of us.

The Indian now began to make violent efforts to escape strangulation, which the pressure Pornandez had kept upon his throat to ensure his silence speedily threatened, and upon being allowed to breathe, he essayed to call the Spaniards, with a view no doubt of saving himself at our expense. Finding that either he or the whole of us must be sacrificed, Bolivar ordered him to be effectually silenced. The Royalists were now endeavouring to hew their way through the thicket, but their horses, goaded by the thorns, refused to obey, and their elevated situation rendered them good marks for us. “Let each take his man from the right,” whispered Bolivar, “and after firing, retreat to the left

through the wood." Their fire was now returned, and rendered cautious and steady, by the sense of the danger we were in : it was with deadly effect, and at the first discharge, four of them fell. Made half mad by this destruction, and irritated at the assurance the report gave them of the smallness of our number, they grew desperate in their attempts to force their way upon us. This loss of coolness operated much to our advantage, and served to throw them into confusion ; while the efforts of the horses belonging to those who had fallen, to escape, increased the uproar, and they were in general disorder and perplexity. Taking advantage of this, a double volley from our pistols was now resolved upon, and each taking his object as before, they were quickly reduced to the same number as ourselves. The Colonel now exclaimed, " There is but man to man ; no more bush-fighting is necessary," and rushed out. The rest followed, and we stood before the remaining portion of the enemy, who had dismounted, and now rapidly advanced upon us. Pornandez, ever ready, let fly a bullet from the carbine of the Spaniard he had taken, and killed one of them on the spot. This forced our antagonists to pause ; and finding that our steadiness threatened to bring them all down in speedy detail, they wheeled about to fly. But just as they had so done, to our astonishment and horror we saw ten others, who had been attracted to the spot

by the firing, advancing towards them. The flying Spaniards rallied, and joined the reinforcement to charge upon us; and it is difficult to conceive a more hopeless or unequal conflict than that we were now exposed to. Our opponents were thirteen to four, and determined, for the sake of the reward they knew would attend their labours, to secure Bolivar. To increase our difficulty, our ammunition was expended; for not having anticipated such an occurrence, we had negligently left all our ball-cartridge in the canoe. We had nothing but the shot used for killing small birds to fire upon them, the effect from which through a thick cover was very doubtful. All but Pornandez had a fowling-piece and rifle barrel on one stock, in the form of a double gun. The fowling-pieces were loaded, and an extra charge of shot put in them, and the Lieutenant, who determined to do the business effectually, loaded his rifle one-fourth the length of the barrel.

Thus prepared, we waited the near approach of the soldiers under the cover to which we had crept upon first seeing the relief. It seemed to be a matter of doubt amongst them whether it were best to dismount or charge on horseback, and while they hesitated and looked for the spot we were in, we seized a favourable opportunity and fired straight to their faces. The dreadful torture produced by such a discharge may be easily imagined;

rendered blind and furious, those who were wounded obstructed the passage of the others, and unable themselves to recede kept their comrades from advancing. The men who had escaped the effects of our fire now fled, and taking a horse each we galloped off to the banks of the river and got into the canoe without further molestation.

We pursued our route, but the Indians were much inclined to be mutinous, and at one period even threatened to take us ashore. By preserving a good watch on their motions, and threatening with instant death the patron if he steered within a certain distance of the banks, this danger was for the present overcome. The death of their companions was not however forgotten, and they only waited an opportunity to revenge them. Some hours passed without any cause of alarm, and we hoped that we were now free from any further attack, as the part of the banks of the Oronoco opposite to us was covered with woods which the Indians represented to us as absolutely impenetrable, and they were believed to be so by Bolivar. It proved otherwise in the end.

Night came on, but it was beautifully clear and serene, and nothing could be heard to interrupt the stillness but the splashing of the paddles and now and then the plunging of the alligators. The atmosphere was temperate, the sky calm and cloudless, with a firmament like that which overhangs the

shores of Italy, and the bright silvery orb of the moon was reflected with additional splendour from the majestic stream over which we glided. His Excellency, whom the events of the preceding night and morning, and the anxiety which still at times was entertained lest the attempt upon his life should be renewed, together with the murmurs of the Indians, had conspired to keep awake, after two or three hours of gloomy silence felt inclined for conversation to cheer away the time which hung heavily upon all. He had just broken out in a rapturous strain of admiration at the beauty of the scene, when suddenly a tremendous volley of musketry was discharged at us from the banks, although fortunately without effect.

Bolivar immediately laid down in the boat and ordered the patron to steer for the opposite side of the river, which he at once refused to do, and the whole crew made an effort to pull for the shore occupied by the enemy. Colonel O'Leary remonstrated to no purpose; and his Excellency finding that unless something was quickly done to intimidate them, we should be given up to the Spaniards, ordered us to fire upon them. We obeyed, and three of them were shot; the patron rose, and by a sudden blow of his paddle knocked the secretary overboard, upon which he was instantly shot, and the others now rose in order to upset the canoe, on which Pornandez jumped in amongst

them, and with the aid of Bolivar shot two more, while I helped Colonel O'Leary on board again. The others were now beaten into compliance with our wishes, and we got out of the reach of the enemy's shot. No other molestation taking place, we arrived in two days at the Pueblo de Marco, where the crews of the canoes were usually relieved. Here we obtained a fresh set of Indians, and the President sought the means of punishing the late crew for their treacherous conduct. He applied to the Alcalde of the place, who had them apprehended, and a few dollars silencing all scruples, if any were entertained, he had them executed instantly, without the least form of trial. This point arranged, we proceeded, and did not meet any other interruption till we came to Angostura.

Two days before we arrived there a laughable occurrence took place to myself, which subjected me for the time to a little danger. Lieutenant Pornandez, who was remarkably fond of a joke, in pursuit of which he was in the thoughtlessness of the moment indifferent to consequences, took advantage of our going ashore to breakfast to play a trick upon me. When Bolivar had left the canoe with his secretary, I was left in it for a few moments in search of some part of our eating equipage, and Pornandez took advantage of this to bribe the two Indians who were with me to upset the canoe, for the sake of giving

me a ducking. They did so, and I was afloat in the midst of seven or eight alligators who were at no great distance from me. The Indians being more expert, had righted the canoe in a moment, and were in it leaving me to shift for myself. It may be imagined that I did not wait long before I commenced swimming to the shore, which was only a few yards from me. I never before made more strenuous exertions; in five or six strokes I was on the beach; and even then so great was my horror of the animals that I could not, although feeling myself on the ground, avoid making the same motion as in swimming. Luckily the alligators were not hungry; they had, I presume, made their morning's repast, and permitted me to escape untouched. Bolivar was much displeased at this joke, and I must confess that I was not in a good humour, though I could not refrain from laughing at my own ludicrous haste to get away. I am however sorry to say that the punishment awarded by the President was more than commensurate with the fault. The joke cost poor Parnandez, who was a brave, generous, and good-natured young man, very dear; for his Excellency never suffered him to rise a grade higher in rank, and utterly discountenanced him ever afterwards. This so preyed upon his mind that he shot himself a short time after, but not effectually. By the assistance of a skilful surgeon he recovered, and

subsequently went with me to Margarita, where he remained till his strength was perfectly restored; and I had the happiness of seeing him united to an English lady of tolerably good property, and finally settling with his fair partner at Halifax, in Nova Scotia.

CHAPTER II.

Reception of the President at Angostura—His cordial meeting with General Arismendez—Removal of the latter from the Vice-Presidency—Effect of the enthusiasm of the populace on the President. Doctor Roscio succeeds Arismendez—Opinions entertained of the conduct of Bolivar—His project for the Union of the two Vice-royalties into one great Republic, to be denominated Colombia—Papers intercepted by Morillo—Indecisive conduct of the Congress—Conduct and character of General Montilla—Application of the British troops for their pay—Spirited behaviour of Colonel Blossett—A duel and its consequences—An issue of pay to the author—His appointment to another naval command—The flecheras—Origin and character of the Sambos—Instructions from the President—Captures several Spanish vessels with small loss.

ON the 16th December 1819, we reached Angostura, after a passage of eighteen days. The wonder which the unexpected arrival of his Excellency created in all classes is inconceivable. Having long been given up for lost with the whole of his troops, and all idea of the establishment of the independence of New Grenada being relinquished, his fame rapidly augmented, when, without the least announcement, he appeared among them with additional power and increased resources. All ranks hailed him with the greatest enthusiasm, and hundreds flocked to the shore to

receive him. As soon as it was known that he had arrived, guns were discharged to salute him, fires were lighted, and couriers employed to announce to all parts of the city the landing of the "Liberador," and he was triumphantly welcomed by every demonstration of joy that could be manifested, and borne on the shoulders of the populace to the government house.

General Arismendez had just departed on a short excursion relative to the building of some vessels a few miles down the Oronoco, and had landed on the opposite bank when the guns commenced firing the salute. Imagining that some couriers had arrived with despatches that required immediate attention, and that the firing was meant as a recal to him, he hastily returned, and was nearly among the first persons of rank who received Bolivar in the grand hall of the government house. As soon as they met, all the fears I had entertained respecting the welfare of my staunch supporter, Arismendez, were dissipated. Bolivar advanced to him with the strongest marks of esteem and cordiality; and evinced the same apparent affectionate joy that he would have shown on meeting a brother from whom he had been long separated. He embraced the General, kissed his veteran cheek, encircled him in his arms, and pressed him to his bosom repeatedly, exclaiming,

as if with the warmest delight, "*Mi querido General.*"*

A sumptuous entertainment was instantly ordered by the General, who with his wonted kindness and consideration invited me to it. 'His Excellency retired to recover the fatigues of his journey and to prepare for the banquet, and I was left alone with Arismendez, who naturally wished to be informed as to the reception of his despatches and the sudden return of the President. I gave all the information I could, and ventured to express the happiness I felt at seeing his Excellency so friendly disposed towards him; but I imagined I could perceive that Arismendez had not so much faith in his professions as I had. We separated till the time appointed for our assembling at dinner, when the same conduct was observed by Bolivar as before. All the officers, both British and native, then at Angostura, the members of the Congress, and all private persons of rank, were there, to the amount of above five hundred. The hall of the government house, which was immensely large, and the other lower apartments, were splendidly fitted up for the occasion, and bands were stationed to play republican tunes during the festivities, which continued till a late

* My beloved General.

hour. His Excellency thanked the British officers *en masse* for their services, and bestowed on them the warmest eulogiums. He then ordered a briezo to the memory of his lamented Rooke, "to whom," said he, "I owe all my recent good fortune in New Grenada, and Venezuela is indebted for the preservation of her President, and will hereafter have mainly to attribute her liberty." After many flowery speeches had been made, the usual Republican toasts given, and the custom before described, of demolishing the glasses, had been amply complied with, his Excellency, uninfluenced by wine, which he had used sparingly, retired with General Arismendez to transact some business, leaving the party to enjoy itself as long as was agreeable.

The next day seemed to demonstrate the little dependence which could be justly vested in the professions and embraces of the Libertador. Arismendez, who had during the interview on the preceding night, with his natural candour and honesty, fully developed all his previous acts while in the office of Vice-President, and detailed the whole of his plans and intentions with regard to the ensuing campaign, was, before twenty-four hours had elapsed from the time he was pressed to the bosom of the President, dismissed from his office without even a cause assigned. It was admitted that his government had been most

judicious, that his expenditure had been economical and discreet, that all his acts had been extremely beneficial to the country, and, in fine, that he was unexceptionably fitted for the office in every particular, save that of not entering so readily as could have been wished into the views and feelings of others. The day after the arrival of the Libertador, the Congress was ordered to meet at two o'clock, and the President, who had been closeted from an early hour with the leading members of his own party, amongst whom was General Urdenetta, went superbly dressed in the uniform of a French field-marshal in procession to the hall. At the entrance a curious scene took place, illustrative of the enthusiasm of the populace and the effect it had on the sensibility of Bolivar. The immense concourse which had flocked to witness the procession set forth loud and reiterated cheers, and this manifestation of their regard for the President induced him to turn about, ere he went into the hall, to make his acknowledgments. He commenced a long oration, which was at every period interrupted by their acclamations and expressions of fidelity. His Excellency at length exclaimed, "These affectionate people quite overpower me," and fell as if fainting, upon which the foremost of them eagerly ran to raise him, and in their struggles for the honour of supporting

the Libertador, the rich dress he wore was so mutilated that he was obliged to return to his chamber to equip himself anew.*

Having returned, the business of the day commenced, and the first thing proposed for the consideration of the Congress, was the nomination of a new Vice-President, as General Arismendez's services were represented to be required in another direction. Arismendez, who had scarcely an hour before received an intimation to that effect from Bolivar, did not attend. He was superseded by Dr Roscio, an old superannuated man enfeebled by debauchery, and who had never done one act to qualify him for such a post but that of paying the most cringing homage to Bolivar, and implicit obedience to his commands on all occasions. Many of the former members of the Congress, whose inclinations were suspected to be not so warm towards the views of the President, were in like manner displaced, and succeeded by others who could not be doubted.

To give a reasonable colouring to the transaction, and at the same time to further his own

* This is by no means an uncommon occurrence. I have witnessed these faintings upon public occasions, and many officers who had served with him in New Grenada, informed me that they have recurred three or four times a day, upon entering towns where his presence was hailed with the same degree of enthusiasm.

private objects, while it seemed to afford a satisfaction and value for the services of the late Vice-President, the latter was appointed General-in-chief of the Eastern district, where he had not the slightest interest and was scarcely known, in the room of General Marino, who was a host within himself in that quarter, from the number of his friends and the extent of his resources. The last-mentioned officer was dismissed from the service altogether and put upon the peace establishment, being superseded in the command of the British Legion and the native troops attached to it, by their old friend the weak, indecisive, unskilful, and avaricious Urdenetta, in opposition to the former decision of the whole Congress and the opinion of the people in general.

I shall not presume to give any opinion of my own upon the conduct of the President on this occasion ; it will be sufficient for me to state that which was entertained by men of the first talents in the Republic, and by the most distinguished of its officers. By these, his measures were condemned as impolitic and ungrateful, as it was well known that the exertions of both the displaced officers merited a much better reward, and that those who had taken their places were undeserving and incompetent to succeed them. Indeed, a great deal of the popular favour seemed waning, as almost every person capable of thinking at all

was inclined to censure severely the removal of Arismendez, who had much endeared himself to them. They knew that his great assiduity and industry had restored the chaos of their affairs to a system of order and regularity; that he had fought and bled repeatedly in their service, and that his purse had been ever cheerfully opened to their necessities, both individually and collectively.

It may seem strange that Bolivar should have treated the General with so much warmth on their meeting; but it was accounted for by those most able to judge of it, on the supposition that he wished to gain every information relative to the measures adopted by the Vice-President during his absence, and to glean all his intentions for the future good of the country. He might then select any part of them he pleased, and, by acting upon them, make it appear as if they were his own; and his duplicity and the ingenuousness of the General having accomplished thus much, he would be able to throw off the mask with safety. Jealousy was also one of his motives for wishing the removal of Arismendez and Marino, and the restoration of Urdenetta. When Arismendez received the reins of government, he had, as has been already shewn, found its affairs in a ruinous state of disorder, from which he recovered them. His natural talents and unceasing efforts to improve the state of the country, and enlighten the

minds of its inhabitants,—which even, in the confusion which then reigned, induced him to form the first plans for the education of the poor, which were ever adopted in Colombia,* and to give a taste for the cultivation of the arts, and the promotion of commerce,—had also rendered him popular and conspicuous. He had likewise manifested the greatest generalship in his military arrangements; and the troops he had raised by conscription, when united to the British legion, would have speedily subjugated every province of Venezuela, if they had been permitted to act according to the way he had pointed out, and had remained under the command of such a man as Marino. The Spaniards would have been forced to capitulate, or would have been driven into the sea; and this effectual and speedy consummation of the freedom of the Republic would have materially raised them both in the public estimation, while Bolivar would have been partially forgotten, or lessened by his absence and non-participation. This the latter very clearly saw; and when he had ascertained from the despatches, and the information I had given him at Bogota, the means they had adopted, he at once resolved, be the ultimate

* These plans have been since adopted, by persons now in power in Colombia, and represented as their own. They are in some manner acted upon, but not to the extent proposed by Arismendez.

consequence what it might to the interests of the Republic, to remove two such meritorious and enterprising rivals, rather than that they should gain any renown in which he could not have the principal share. By restoring Urdenetta to his justly lost rank, he well knew that he could rely upon certain movements being in strict conformity with his directions, even if he were obliged to return to New Grenada, which was expected. The energies of the troops would, if necessary, be repressed, as they had been during the previous campaign, that the inhabitants of Venezuela might believe that all their good fortune was owing to the able management and skilful generalship of the President alone.

Such were the opinions entertained by the principal persons, civil and military, then at Angostura, who were not bought over to the interests of the Libertador. I will not vouch for their correctness, but will leave their probability to the candour and penetration of the reader.

Having thus removed them, his Excellency next proceeded to alter all the line of operations framed by these Generals. The destination of the troops was changed, and they were ordered to the plains of the Apure, to join the cavalry of General Paez, instead of proceeding to the city of Caraccas, which they were first to have attacked. This done, he prepared to open the most colossal of his

intentions to the Congress, at its next meeting; namely, the union of the two Vice-royalties of New Grenada and Venezuela, under one head and form of government, to be styled the Republic of Colombia. This was carried in the senate by a small majority, which he had taken care to ensure by his weight and party influence, and that never failing source of corruption, bribery. After three days occupied in arguments for, and in opposition to the Union, a proclamation was published under the title of the Decree of St Thomas of Angostura. It ordered that the two countries should be united, that the Congress of Venezuela should be dissolved after the expiration of its present sittings, and that the next one formed should be appointed from the inhabitants of both Vice-royalties, and consist of an Upper Chamber, or Senate, of fifty members, who should be elected for a period of eight years; also a Lower Chamber, or House of Representatives, of ninety members, to be elected for four years. The whole to be declared the General Congress of Colombia, and to be holden for the convenience of the members of both Vice-royalties, at Rosario de Cucuta, situated nearly on the confines of each, for the first time in the month of January 1821.

Various were the opinions entertained as to the policy and propriety of this union. Bolivar's own party were violent and enthusiastic in their sup-

port of what they termed the stupendous project of his heaven-inspired genius ; others, who could not foresee its disadvantages, looked upon it as likely to produce neither harm nor good to either country, and only attributed its formation to a vain desire on the part of Bolivar to distinguish himself as the founder of so extensive a Republic. Many, however, even among the more enlightened and impartial, were strongly averse to the measure, condemning it as calculated to create serious contentions and bloodshed between the inhabitants of the two states, and to drain that military assistance and support from Venezuela which it so much needed for its own defence. It was well known that the Venezuelans were never friendly inclined towards the New Grenadians, and the latter were not even peaceably disposed to the former, having made repeated efforts to subdue and exact contributions and submission from them. Yet strange to say, though many men of great talents and local interest and power entertained and adhered to these opinions most tenaciously, scarcely any of them had the independence to publicly avow them, or to oppose the union at the proper time and place. It was only in their own private circles that they even acknowledged them.

The biography, or the history of men's private actions and motives in times of revolution, often form a most disagreeable and humiliating study.

It was curious to observe how idly formed, how stubbornly held, and perniciously maintained, were the principles of many of the leading men of the New Republic, and how perverted were the talents of others; how easily one half was baffled and embarrassed by the alarms created by the remainder, and their energies suppressed by the fear of acting in such a manner as to incur the displeasure of the chief and his party. Many, scarcely firm in their pursuits through the dread of being detected in their intrigues, laboured to preserve a show of consistency, by an unusual degree of noise, and endeavoured to dispel the apprehensions which would obtrude upon them, as children in the dark drive away the imaginary visions of sprites by whistling and shouting. That some few of the Republican chieftains were staunch and genuine patriots, was however unquestionable; and it was the more creditable to them, as they had to contend with a host of persons with whom the welfare and interests of the country were of secondary consideration. It was fortunate too for the Republic that the few persons who opposed the leading party were possessed of too much interest and power to render them insignificant opponents; and that although their resources failed to ensure the establishment of the foundation of the future benefit of the people upon the best and broadest basis, they

still held in check the sinister arts of the chiefs, supported by the majority. Had it not been for such men as Paez, Montilla, Marino, and some few more, the Republic would have changed its appellation for that of kingdom, years since. The paramount party were certainly destitute of the fine feelings which they contrived to gain credit for by the representations of their numerous friends, who were in the habit of sending garbled statements of the conduct and disinterestedness of those whose cause they espoused to the American, Jamaica, and other newspapers, that they might gain extensive circulation. This fact was too well established in Venezuela, in the early part of 1821, to admit of a doubt, by the circumstance of many of the original documents falling into the hands of the Spaniards. Being captured in the vessel which was conveying them to their destination, they were delivered to Morillo, who, after having perused them, returned them to the owner with a sarcastic apology for their detention.

A more absurd, contradictory, tessellated set of principles than those adopted and maintained by the Congress in general, or a more vacillating body of men than the majority of its members, was perhaps never congregated together by any hazard. Cold and mysterious in the political questions which should have been agitated with generosity

and confidence, they were unreasonably severe where forbearance and mildness were necessary ; while the unjustifiable speculation of their individual friends was uniformly overlooked. The affairs of the country were treated with reserve and openness, caution and rashness, liberality and penuriousness, as they were influenced by the interests or caprices of the various parties to which they belonged. So deficient were they in decision, that a simple question relative to the building of two *flecheras*, for the purpose of guarding a particular point on the river, occupied them five days in continued discussion, and was finally adjourned till the new Congress should assemble, in consequence of one party wishing them to be four feet longer than the other.

General Montilla, brother to the Colonel of the same name before alluded to, was exceedingly indignant at the manœuvre of uniting the two Viceroyalties, and, unlike many others, had the honesty and independence to express his feelings at every opportunity. Born at Caraccas, of equal descent with Bolivar, and feeling that he had made at least as many personal sacrifices of every description in the cause of liberty as the President, he justly conceived that he had a right to oppose a measure so likely to injure the future prospects of his country. Possessing the most unbounded attachment to the independent cause, without the

least desire for his own advantage, he could not bear the idea of having the affairs of the Republic carried from its own bosom to be debated in New Grenada, whose inhabitants, he could well see, would form the chief part of the intended Congress, and monopolize all places of profit and honour under the government to themselves, in consideration of the aid given to Bolivar in establishing the union. Aware, too, that it was proposed to hold the Congress at Bogota, the capital of New Grenada, after the one which was to assemble at Rosario de Cucuta was adjourned, he saw that the principal population and wealth would be gradually drawn from Venezuela to the seat of government, and thus his own country would be inevitably impoverished. He therefore, whenever the matter was in discussion, took advantage of his situation as member of the Senate to denounce it and its promoters, with the greatest severity, as persons endeavouring to enrich themselves at the expense of the community at large. Upon one occasion I heard him, while pointedly and emphatically addressing Bolívar, directly tell the latter that the next thing he would aim at would be to form the republic into a monarchy, and raise himself to the head of it. Montilla possessed a brilliant flow of eloquence, with a disposition to ingenious satire; and he did not fail to employ a good deal of bitter sarcasm

during these debates, which must have been extremely grating to the feelings of those to whom it was applied. He was a brave officer, a sincere friend, and possessed very comprehensive talents, with a mind and disposition perfectly corresponding. To the brave, undaunted character of the soldier, he added that of the mild, unassuming gentleman, and the noble-minded patriot. Few men ever deserved higher rewards from the people of Colombia than he did. He is now unfortunately no more, and when he died his country suffered in him a severe loss.

My worthy friend, General Arismendez, having received his dismissal, could not take any part in the debates, and therefore did not attend them. He had been allowed only thirty-six hours to prepare himself for his departure to the scene of his future exertions, which were understood to be the formation of a body of native troops, similar to that he had so successfully raised while Vice-President, the merit of which now passed into other hands. These troops were to be trained immediately and sent to the plains of Apure, to join the Libertador. I saw the General for a few minutes before he left the city, and received from him every proof of his friendship that he could bestow.

It having been understood that Bolivar had obtained considerable wealth by his expedition to New Grenada, and that his resources were aug-

mented to a vast extent, the British troops thought a portion of the advantage should be applied towards the liquidation of their arrears, as they had received very little pay since their arrival in the country; and as to rations, it has been already shewn how they were supplied. A memorial was therefore framed in the most respectful terms, addressed to his Excellency, praying that their pay might be given them; but although their present necessities and past sufferings were powerfully depicted, it failed to produce the effect hoped for, or even to procure an answer. The men then became clamorous, and would not march till satisfied. In this emergency another memorial was drawn up, which Colonel Blossett undertook to present to his Excellency in the name of the Legion, and to obtain a direct answer at once.

With this intent he went to the Government-house, to request an audience of the President, and while waiting in an anti-room to fulfil his object, a native Brigadier-general, not remarkable for the liberality of his sentiments towards the British, who had learned the purport of Colonel Blossett's visit, remarked that the English troops were never satisfied, and that he hoped his Excellency would treat the second application as he had done the first. The Colonel, whose temperament was warm, and who felt for the men under him, retorted

sharply, and an altercation ensued, which he could only put an end to by desiring the attendance of the General, within five minutes after he had received the answer of Bolivar, who now consented to a partial payment of the arrears due to the Legion. This point settled, the Colonel withdrew to keep his assignation with the General, in which contest the latter fell severely wounded in the neck.

This incident, although it may seem trifling, as being the result of a personal fracas, operated very powerfully upon the situation of the British then in the service. Previously, if any complaint escaped them, it was treated with contemptuous indifference, and they had been several times individually insulted; but now that a spirit of resentment was so seriously manifested, and followed up by several challenges from the junior officers,—who had restrained their feelings till the example thus shown them—and that affairs occurred in which three or four of the natives fell, a greater show of gratitude was maintained by the inhabitants, and the Legion was treated with much more respect. It having been whispered among the soldiers that Colonel Blossett would be made to suffer for the late event, they all expressed their determination of compelling the authorities to restore him to them unhurt; but they were pacified upon his returning amongst them,

and the arrival of an assurance from the President, that in a short time all their wishes should be complied with.

Acting upon the advice of Arismendez, I had regularly attended the levees of the Libertador, who had done me the honour to notice me in a very flattering manner, and had informed me that he should soon have occasion for my services afloat. However, as yet no offer had been made of any pay, and I most severely felt the want of it. Seizing therefore a favourable moment, I ventured to intimate that my arrears would be acceptable, expressing great regret at the length of time which had passed, and must then elapse, before they could be all discharged. His Excellency presented me with an order upon the treasury for 100 dollars, a sum which I had reason to remember, as it proved the only pay I ever received for a three years' harassing service and a broken constitution.

A considerable time was now taken up in balls and feasts, given by and in honour of the President, and little was thought of besides the enjoyment of the moment. When however satiety succeeded these pleasures, in which, as may be supposed, the intellectual share was but small, the preparations commenced for the campaign in the plains. Flecheras were ordered to be built, large supplies of stores of all descriptions were sent for from the United States, and every inducement was offered

to the natives to enlist in the service. The latter measure was not very successful; but the officers of the government were despatched to the nearest towns to the anticipated seat of warfare, to recruit, and the British legion was ordered to proceed to the town of Achaguas, which was appointed headquarters till further orders should be issued.

The day was now named for the departure of the President for Achaguas, an island formed by the river Apure, containing a town of the same name; and the night before he left Angostura, I was sent for to attend him. I obeyed, and received an appointment to the command of five large flecheras and a sloop, with orders to protect the trade of the river Oronoco, and to attack all vessels bearing Spanish colours that I should fall in with during my cruizes. This little squadron had been commanded by a very gallant English officer named Bingham, who had done great service to the country while in this command, and who had fallen in a severe engagement with the Royalist fleet, in which, however, four or five of their ships had been taken.

The flechera is a species of gun-boat peculiarly adapted for shallow water, while they are very safe at sea. They vary in size from about 35 feet in length to 100, and are exceedingly narrow and sharp, the largest of them drawing little more than a foot of water at the head. The smallest usually

carry one gun, a 12-pounder; the second rate, a long 18; and the largest have sometimes two, a 24-pounder and an 18. These guns are mounted on swivels, and are very useful either in chase or in any other situation, from the ease with which they are worked, and at the same time, although they are of a very light construction, cause no perceptible effect on the boats, as the recoil is principally confined to the stanchions which support them. The first-rates have commonly three moveable masts, on which are hoisted what are termed by English sailors shoulder-of-mutton sails; but the smaller ones have but one mast, and carry a large square sail. Their sails are however but seldom hoisted except at night, as all their movements are conducted with the utmost secrecy; and whenever there is light enough to descry a sail, unless extraordinary expedition is required, they are worked with paddles in the manner of the *bungos*. Those placed under my command were of the first class, and each had 120 men, chiefly of the Sambo tribe, mixed with a few Indians, and the sloop had forty-seven Englishmen on board, and twenty-three blacks, making in the whole a force of 680 men, exclusive of three officers. With this fleet an active persevering officer could annoy the enemy much more than with as many frigates, as the *flecheras* possess many advantages of which a large vessel is destitute in shoal water or river navi-

gation. They will lie in any little creek unperceived, and when a ship passes them they dart across like an arrow, and board her instantly. When a superior force to their own is going by, they first discharge their guns with great precision, and then, while the enemy are still in confusion, ascend the sides of their ships with amazing rapidity, and often in one rush sweep them clear of their crews.

Flecheras of war are always principally manned by the Sambo blacks, who are selected for their bravery and ferocity, and are characters of the most desperate description. Their lives, during the war of the Revolution, were passed in one continued scene of plunder and murder, in which they seemed to delight. They are the descendants of some of the unhappy Indians who were the aborigines of Venezuela and New Grenada, and composed the remnants of their unoffending countrymen who escaped the vast sacrifice of life which was caused by the avarice and brutality of their conquerors. By the Spaniards this unhappy race had been allotted portions of labour in the mines, far beyond their strength; as the Indians, notwithstanding their good size and muscular figure, are very weak, and incapable of severe toil, while both their dispositions and natural qualifications render them more qualified for a life of domestic quietude and inactivity. Finding therefore that they were incompetent to work the

mines effectually, their avaricious enslavers annually imported quantities of Negroes from various parts of Africa, who were more inured to labour; and from the union of these slaves with the remainder of the native Indians, sprang the Sambos, who are chiefly remarkable for their desperate courage and thirst for blood; which qualities rendered them a dreadful scourge to the Royalists during the war-of-extermination. In person, they differ but very slightly from the original Negroes; their colour is but a shade lighter, and their hair precisely the same. The features have also the same characteristic form. They are insensible of danger, and, being fatalists, never yield to any adverse circumstances, however appalling; but their inherent cruelty is almost past belief.

Such were the men I was destined to command; but I must do them the justice to say that they were, except on a few occasions, very obedient and tractable. This might have arisen from their desire to have British officers, which is in them, like all other classes of natives, very observable. While under the native chiefs they have been stubborn and self-willed, and indifferent as to the issue of their contests: indeed, they have been known to betray their officers into the hands of the enemy, whose service they have joined; but when led by any of the British, they have behaved extremely well. The chief trouble they gave me was to

prevent them from cutting each other's throats, which they are sometimes apt to do in their disputes, which generally arise out of discussions of their comparative merits in the service of Mars or Venus.

The next officer to myself was an old Spaniard, named Marichio, who had formerly held the rank of Lieutenant in the Spanish navy. He had much of the pride and indolence of his nation about him, but was a staunch patriot in principle, a very worthy man, and a brave and good officer. Still, unfortunately, he had not the slightest influence with the crews under him, who treated him with contempt and derision, simply, I believe, from the prejudice they universally held against his country. Whenever a quarrel arose among those whom he immediately commanded, he invariably sent for me to quell it, and I found no difficulty in doing so; though so great was their hatred to him, that any interference on his part would, in all probability, have made him a head shorter. On joining them, they expressed the most lively satisfaction at not having a native officer placed over them, and obeyed every order with great alacrity; but I had not been long on board when the patrons or steersmen of all the flecheras (who were in most instances the founders of all the mischief that was plotted) came to me, to request that I would send Marichio on shore,

assuring me very seriously that he was a bad fellow and would betray us to the Spaniards. This of course I could not comply with, had I been so inclined; I therefore endeavoured to reconcile them to him, and eventually made up matters pretty comfortably.

My general orders from the Congress, were to cruize about the river Oronoco, and to return to the capital every three weeks for further instructions. My private directions from his Excellency the President, were to consider his orders in preference to those of the Congress, and to forward all specie I might take from any of my prizes to him, at the head-quarters of the army. I now sailed, or rather paddled about, waiting for an opportunity to call the energies of my crew into action. I found that, although entirely ignorant of navigation, they were very correct in all their operations.* They have no idea of a compass, but always steer in the rivers by little notches and other marks cut in the trees, so small that no one but themselves can perceive them, and when they have occasion to go to sea they are guided by some fixed star, of whose precise situa-

* The knowledge they possessed of the extensive range of coast was truly surprising; not a tree, bush, or creek, did we pass but they could readily distinguish it, and for each they had a name, which was denoted by a sort of hieroglyphic cut in some part of each of them.

tion they have a good knowledge, and are rarely known to commit an error in their reckoning.

Soon after I left Angostura, while laying up in one of the numerous creeks where we had remained all night, we were gratified by the appearance of three brigs laden with provisions and stores, intended for the service of the Royalist troops, which were easily taken, and their miserable crews put to death. I could find no means of preventing this carnage, as my orders were too decisive to admit of any omission: and I am firmly persuaded that the employment thus made for the Sambos was the only means of retaining me their good opinion; for nothing less than a full satiety of their appetite for bloodshed can ever induce them to be active, or to display their courage. Here was however but too much work for them, for the Spanish vessels were continually passing and re-passing to and from their respective destinations, and in the space of three weeks we captured two schooners of war, having troops on board, a corvette, and six small brigs, at the loss of about seventy men on the Independent side.

CHAPTER III.

Arrival at Angostura—Ordered to join the expedition under Colonel Montilla—Encounter with a Spanish squadron—Ferocity and insubordination of the Sambos—Opportune arrival of the Independent Fleet—Author joins Colonel Montilla—Capture of Savanilla—Pursuit of retreating Spaniards—Nearly surprised by the enemy—Spaniards allowed to retreat without their arms—Return to Angostura—Rejected overtures of General Morillo, and the court of Spain—Author captures a brig with specie on board—Sails for Margarita—Chased on his return by a Spanish squadron—Manner of his escape—Ordered with despatches to Maturin—Author's vessel surprised by the Spaniards during his absence—Loses everything by the capture—Kindness of General Arismendez—Author nominated to the command of a fleet of flecheras—Sent to Trinidad—Description of the Rauchas—Sails for Margarita—Meets a Spanish vessel without the means of resisting it—Stratagem to escape observation—Arrival at Pampatar, to wait the arrival of General Devereux.

ON going to Angostura, I found that General's Arismendez and Montilla had been ordered to join the troops of Paez, on the plains of the Apure, and here an union was effected with the small division under General Soublette, who was, I believe, a good soldier and a staunch patriot, but his services were never materially demanded, therefore his best qualities remained almost unknown to the country at large. Colonel Montilla

had also received the command of a force for the purpose of attacking the port of Savanilla, at the western entrance of the Magdalena, in which service Admiral Brion was ordered to assist him with his fleet, and the troops destined for the latter service were then preparing for their march. I also received orders to join the expedition under Montilla, and was directed to sail immediately. Taking a stock of provisions on board, I proceeded down the Oronoco and along the coast, intending to join the fleet, if possible, on its way to the scene of action; but in the gulph of Triste I was met and surrounded by a Spanish squadron of fifteen vessels, mostly schooners well manned, which had been ordered up the Oronoco to clear the river of all the Republican flecheras. I was driven by necessity to make the best defence I could against such a superior force, finding that any attempt to escape would be fruitless.

The Sambos behaved with the greatest coolness at first, and by taking deliberate aim managed to carry away the masts of four of the enemy's vessels, and thus not only threw them into much confusion but killed many of their hands, though it was at the sacrifice of more than a hundred of themselves, who were killed by the constant fire of grape maintained by the Royalists. Seeing their companions thus falling round them, the furious Sambos could no longer restrain themselves,

and encouraged by the patrons, they loudly called for orders to board the vessels they had disabled, to wreak their vengeance on the crews of them. Such a step I was but too well assured would be the destruction of the whole of us, and therefore essayed by every means in my power to prevent it. In this I was unfortunately but badly seconded, as my brother officers, being natives, or Spaniards, had no influence with the men. Marichio did all in his power to keep them back, and, as usual, was laughed at. Meantime the fire was galling us dreadfully, and the patrons becoming more enraged threatened to shoot Marichio for opposing them. I therefore was obliged, as the only means of preserving myself and the remainder of the crew, to give orders to the officers and sailors to shoot all the patrons. This done, the others seemed more inclined to listen to my orders, and manœuvred so well with their guns that, although hemmed in on all sides, the Spaniards were kept at bay, and so continued till night favoured us, when we contrived to escape through them. When daylight returned, however, we found ourselves still closely pursued and within shot, but, using every effort, we contrived to increase the distance between us and the enemy. At length, while stretching across the mouth of the gulph of Coro, occasionally firing a shot at them, the squadron destined by Admiral



Brion for the assistance of Montilla, under the gallant Captain Chitty, hove in sight and bore down, being attracted by our firing. Chitty having hoisted Spanish colours, the Royalists of course imagined that it was the remainder of their own fleet, and now made sure of taking the whole of the flecheras. I had also, from the circumstance of seeing the Spanish flag hoisted, made up my mind to be captured, from which I could see no hope of escape.

The Sambos had got everything ready for a last desperate struggle—not for their lives, for they regarded them at all times as nought, and now gave them up as lost—but for an increase of slaughter of their enemies, and therefore waited quietly till the squadron just discovered should come close enough to receive the contents of their guns. They were rapidly gaining ground and approaching on our weather quarter, but were still getting nearer to the enemy than to us. Every moment was expected to bring us a volley that would sink our little fleet, and being anxious to anticipate it, I was on the point of giving orders for the Sambos to fire on the new comers, when a broadside was discharged from them, to our astonishment not at us, but at our pursuers. Chitty, being now near enough to effect his object, lowered the Spanish flag, and to my great relief I saw the Independent colours take its place. The

Sambos gave a loud yell, and the flecheras now joined in the attack, which was warm but of short duration. The Royalists, finding themselves likely to be worsted, hoisted all the sails they could and made the best of their way from us, leaving six of their vessels in our hands. Chitty's orders being to join Montilla almost instantly, we had not time for a pursuit.

We now proceeded to a little village named Gazita, one league from Savanilla, at the entrance of a narrow river, which had been appointed the place of rendezvous for the forces destined for the attack. The flecheras were drawn up on the beach and there safely moored, and I took the crews on shore, now amounting to not quite 500 men. A party of seamen also accompanied us under a very brave English officer, Captain Noel, while the fleet moved further up towards the port, in order to commence the bombardment.

Having been joined by the force under Montilla the same night, we marched early the ensuing morning to the outworks, to begin the siege. A somewhat lofty fortification, with strong bastions, on which the port principally depended, was the first point we were ordered to attack, and the seamen and blacks were directed to storm it, while the troops marched round to another fort, the ships having by a preconcerted signal began to pour in their shells incessantly. Being provided with scaling

ladders, the sailors, who were chiefly Englishmen, ascended with loud huzzas, the Sambos, with their deafening yell of triumph, following. A sharp conflict ensued on the ramparts and in the streets, which lasted about twenty minutes, when the Royalists fled. The loss was great on both sides; that of the Royalists, including the prisoners who were put to death after the action, could not have been less than 1,500. On the Independent side it amounted to above 700, including 150 of the Sambos. Soon after this place had been captured, a New Grenadian officer came from Bogota, *via* the Magdalena, with a party of volunteers in some canoes, and speedily took fourteen Spanish gun-boats at Teneriffe, which was a very essential service at that period.

The next step was that of ensuring the obedience of the province for the future, to accomplish which, it was deemed necessary to march to the encampment formed by the fugitive Royalists, and either to expel them the province, or complete their destruction. They were stationed about four leagues from the port, of which Montilla had secured the undisturbed possession by a treaty with the natives, in which they declared for the patriot cause, many of them enrolling themselves under his banners. The day after this negotiation was concluded, we marched after the Spaniards, and came to a skirmish with them,

which lasted not more than half an hour, when they fled, after having a few of their men killed, and we pursued them to the verge of a wood which they had entered, when the bugles sounded for us to halt. Here Montilla was guilty of an oversight not usual with him, which had nearly proved fatal to us all. He ordered us to bivouac for the night close to the skirts of the wood, intending to return the next morning to the port, imagining that the Royalists had fled from the province altogether. We had, however, reposed only about two hours, when we were attacked by the enemy, who had only retreated under cover of the brushwood, in order to draw us into an ambuscade if we had followed them, and finding that we did not, they waited till we were all asleep, that they might surprise us. Fortunately for us (for Montilla had not thought it necessary to post piquets or to appoint centinels) the bank under which we lay, and which bounded the wood, was composed of loose earth, and when the Spaniards mounted to the top of it, it gave way and rolled down on the native troops beneath, and thus alarmed the whole body. Still their first fire made some havoc, and the attack which instantly followed with the bayonet and lance must have been more fatal, had not the sailors discharged their muskets and pistols, which threw the enemy into some disorder; and the Sambos, taking advan-

tage of it, rushed on them with their machettis, and with the aid of the seamen soon drove them to their old quarters in the wood, still closely pursuing them. Meanwhile the Creole troops, in spite of the strenuous endeavours of Colonel Montilla and his officers to rally them, had fled, all but a band of two hundred Guerillas, who joined in the pursuit, which was continued the whole day. Each body, under its own respective leader, and without any chief, also pushed on during the ensuing night, destroying all who stayed behind of the enemy, till at length, about noon the next day, both parties being completely overpowered with fatigue, were obliged to lay down close to each other, without the power of coming to an action.

The Spaniards having continued to move on while their strength allowed them, at last, as if by the general consent, fell down, determined to meet their fate at once, and their pursuers were too weary to offer them the least violence. Here we lay above two hours under the agony of excessive thirst, during which interval Captain Noel, General Gorima, the Guerilla chief, and myself, consulted as to our future proceedings, when it was determined that we should not let the Spaniards go unless they would lay down their arms; and, if they refused, that we should commence an action as soon as the men were sufficiently rested. It was also agreed that, as

Gorima was the senior officer, and a known brave man, we should place ourselves under his command till we returned to Colonel Montilla.

The Spaniards beginning to show symptoms of a desire to escape without leaving their arms behind them, Gorima gave orders for the attack, which accordingly commenced, not with much vigour on either side; and in a short time the Royalists yielded up their arms, and fled with as much speed as they could, taking with them twelve muskets, which we allowed them to retain to kill cattle for their subsistence. After resting a few hours, we retraced our steps, and met Colonel Montilla, who having after much difficulty rallied his troops, was marching after us. He expressed himself much pleased at the manner in which we had acted, and kindly wrote a flattering account of our conduct to the Congress.

The whole province having been restored to tranquillity, after a few skirmishes with those of the natives who still adhered to the Spaniards, my business there was at an end, and in compliance with the orders I had received from the Congress, I returned to Angostura with my men, now reduced to less than three hundred. I arrived there the 3rd of March 1820, and found that during the time I had been away General Morillo had become sensible of the danger of his situation, and in consequence had, in the commencement

of the previous month, made overtures of a reconciliation to Bolivar, on certain conditions, which were incompatible with the independence of the Republic. To these, it was reported, Bolivar was inclined to listen, but that he was overruled by the members of the Venezuelan Congress, who recommended that, as the Royalists were aware of their danger, nothing short of the acknowledged freedom of Colombia should be attended to. At this time also arrived some commissioners from the court of Spain, delegated to treat with the patriots on similar terms to those offered by Morillo; but, as they had no authority to acknowledge their independence, they were not received.

In my passage up the Orinoco I was fortunate enough to fall in with and capture a large brig of war, which had lost a great many of her hands by the yellow fever. This vessel had a quantity of specie on board, the property of the officers, which they had obtained by their prizes. The money I took with me to the capital, and then received orders to go to the island of Margarita, with despatches for the Governor-General Clementi. I departed immediately, and returned as soon as the replies were ready, with some property belonging to General Arismendez, which his lady had sent for his use, when I acquired the intelligence that the renowned General Devereux was believed to be on his passage from England, according to advices

received from him, to claim his reward for the troops he had sent out. On my passage to the capital I was chased by a strong squadron of eleven vessels, sent after the force under Captain Chitty. Seeing me, their attention was diverted from their original object, and at the place called the Bocasses, from the several mouths of the Oronoco meeting there, they endeavoured to force me to an action, but this was avoided by getting into shoal water where they could not reach us.

Finding that there would be little chance of ultimately escaping without coming to an engagement, I deemed it expedient to let the men take a night's rest in a creek into which they had taken shelter, as they were fatigued with paddling against the force of the current through the Bocasses, and by their labours for two days previously. I therefore anchored the sloop about two hundred yards from the flecheras, opposite to them, and still kept a good look out. The enemy were not however inclined to wait till the morning, but came in their boats, about twenty in number, to the attack by moon-light, thinking perhaps to surprise us unprepared. The watch on deck perceived them long before they came near us, and we had previously got everything ready for their reception. The guns carried by the sloop (four 8-pounders) were heavily loaded with grape-shot, and having a remarkably strong boarding net, which I had purchased

at Margarita, fixed, while the crews stood ready to receive them with a volley of musketry in addition. Having ordered a Sambo to jump overboard and swim to the flecheras, to apprize them of the danger, and to direct them to come out as soon as the first volley was fired, I allowed the enemy's boats to come as near as I thought proper, and then ordered the men to fire. They poured such a volley upon the Spaniards, that they seemed inclined to put back, and upon seeing the flecheras approach they soon fled. The Sambos were as little inclined to let them go as they were to stay, and called loudly for permission to put them to death. Getting into the flechera commanded by Marichio, I went after them, and captured six of the boats without difficulty, but the rest escaped.

I now went on board the sloop, with the intention of going on to Angostura without a moment's delay, as I knew the weakness of my force, and did not like another attack by daylight, which would enable the ships to work their guns upon us. Ere I arrived at the capital, I was hailed by a corvette belonging to Admiral Brion's division, which had an order for me to immediately proceed to the town of Maturin, where his Excellency the President, with Generals Paez and Arismendez then was, to deliver the despatches of General Clementi to him personally, and to receive further directions. I therefore went up the river to the

nearest place to Maturin for landing, and took all the Englishmen who remained alive (eighteen) ashore with me, armed; giving a particular caution to Marichio (whose indolence, I feared, would be productive of some mischief), as to the necessity of keeping a vigilant watch, lest another surprise should be attempted.

I commenced the march through the woods, in which I was forced to sleep that night beneath torrents of rain, and nearly covered with the water that rushed over us as we lay upon the ground. With the aid of some pieces of sail-cloth which we had brought for the purpose, our fire-arms were kept dry, in the event of our having use for them. We reached Maturin the next night. I found that I was required to take the flechera-men to the plains of the Apure, to join the division with which they were intended to act as a party of pioneers, and in any other way circumstances might require; previously to which I was to go to the island of Trinidad, to receive a quantity of stores, arms, &c. which had been purchased for the Republican government in England, and consigned to Mr Henderson. The next morning I was to have started, but was prevented by the arrival of four or five of the Sambos, who came in fatigued and wounded, to inform me that Marichio had suffered himself to be surprised, and that he and all the crews, except my informers, had been slaughtered. I was now in an awkward

predicament, as I had lost whatever I possessed—clothes, money, instruments, maps, charts, journals, and everything else: I had just the suit I wore left. I was therefore induced to availing myself of a rule, professedly acted upon by the authorities of Colombia, to replace the losses of officers incurred this way; and made application to Bolívar to be allowed to draw upon his Excellency for three hundred dollars for my present wants. That resource however failed me, as he declared himself without such a sum at the moment, and I was in consequence compelled to again avail myself of the assistance of my ever kind friend Arismendez, who, as soon as he heard of Bolívar's refusal, advanced me double the sum I had required from the Libertador.

My command being thus annihilated, I was under the necessity of soliciting another, and was desired by his Excellency to go with General Arismendez to Margarita, where the latter was ordered to receive General Devereux. My business was to learn if there was a prospect of the arrival of any more troops, or if the supplies of stores and arms which had been promised by him were forthcoming. This circumstance afforded an excuse for depriving General Arismendez of his rank in the eastern district, and he was thus thrown by degrees out of office altogether.

The General and myself started at an early

period for Angostura, where we were to provide ourselves with a flechera for the voyage, leaving Bolivar upon the point of marching to Cucuta to attack the Royalists. Soon after our arrival there, Arismendez received additional orders express from Bolivar, to assemble all the flecheras which were cruizing off the coast of Trinidad and in the gulf of Paria, and to form them into a fleet, and give me the command of them. The good old General, with every emotion of pleasure, hastened to put me in possession of these vessels; and without waiting for the preparation of a flechera large enough for our conveyance, took a very small one, which he would insist was commodious enough. When however we entered, with the General's secretary, servants, and the crew, making in the whole twenty-six persons, with all our baggage, in a vessel not more than 30 feet long, we brought the gunnel within six inches of the water. She answered very well while going along the side of the river, where there was but little current; but when we came to the Bocasses, where the swell was heavy and the force of the rapids strong, she was constantly full, and our whole time was occupied in baling her; and even then, with all our labour, we could scarcely prevent her from sinking. In order to remedy this inconvenience, we placed a piece of canvas, eighteen inches deep, all round the upper part; but even then she would

not proceed safely, and the General being now convinced of it, came to the resolution of putting into Guiria, for the purpose of getting another; where we were obliged to wait till one could be built, as there was none in the place. Here we received intelligence of a Spanish privateer corvette, with a brig in company, cruising somewhere near; and General Arismendez felt it necessary to send me to Trinidad in the old flechera, with part of her crew, to purchase a long 18-pounder for the new one. I therefore started, but was soon hailed by the corvette, which fired several shots at the flechera; but as it was very calm at the time, there was little danger of being captured. Unfortunately for the poor Indians, a 12-pound shot came amongst them during the chace, which killed three of them, and rendered another helpless. By the increased exertions of the remainder, I reached the island in safety, and returned on the fourth day, taking with me two English sailors, who had volunteered to accompany me in the room of the deceased Indians. They were of little use to me in navigating the flechera, as the method is very foreign to our mode of working boats; but my object in taking them was to have some aid if we should again be attacked, which was not the case; and we reached Guiria without any accident, where we found the new flechera already launched, by the activity of the carpenters of the place, and the

Indians left behind, who are commonly excellent workmen. The next thing to be completed were the sails, which Arismendéz himself undertook to cut out, and, with the help of the English sailors, to make.

Two days, therefore, after I returned from Trinidad, we again started for the rendezvous of the flecheras, which was in a small creek in the deep bight formed by the concavity of the western coast of Trinidad, about nine leagues from the Dragon's mouth. It is known only to the Indians and Sambos, who had sought refuge there at various periods during the war, when pursued by the Spaniards, and had cultivated a small plantation of plantains, with a few tropical fruits and some maize, to furnish them with provisions on an emergency. Here all the flecheras were in the habit of meeting every twentieth day, to receive the orders of the Congress, and to make a report of their proceedings. We arrived there two days before the usual time for their coming in, and were obliged to erect a raucha to shelter us while we waited. Rauchas are tents, which are erected in South America by travellers to protect them from the heat or rain, while resting on their journeys. They are of simple construction, and the materials of which they are composed are in most places close at hand. Four or six posts, according to the size required, are driven into the ground with

cross pieces to support the roof, which is made of slight pieces of wood laid across the supporters at equal distances, and secured by the clasps of a large description of honeysuckle. Over these are laid the expansive leaves of the bean tree, the edges folding over each other, which effectually keep out the rain. When they are required for any length of time, the sides are covered in the same manner as the roof, with a door of similar contrivance, and they will then last for many months with an occasional layer of leaves on the top.

We waited here five days after the usual time of the coming in of the flecheras without seeing anything of them, and were in consequence apprehensive that they had either fallen into the hands of the enemy, or were lost in a heavy storm which had raged two days and nights since our landing. On the sixth day we were agreeably surprised to see some of them making towards us, but fearful that they might not be friends, we received them with every precaution, concealing ourselves behind the trees and bushes, with our arms presented, and the long gun loaded to half its length with all sorts of missiles. They informed us that they had been nearly lost on different parts of the coast, and had been driven out of their course, which had caused the delay. The boats all bore proofs of this statement, and

were so much injured as to require repairing before it was safe for them to venture out to sea again ; and as this would occupy some time, and the arrival of the others was uncertain, the General thought it better to proceed to Margarita, as the time for his arrival there was at hand, leaving them to follow us. We therefore left Trinidad the following morning, and unluckily encountered a severe gale the next day, in which we were nearly lost. The flechera was so much strained and made so much water, that we had no alternative but to throw the gun overboard to keep her from sinking. After being driven almost to the island of Tobago, the storm subsided, and having used all our strength to regain our course, the fourth night after our departure we were seen by a Spanish vessel, which seemed likely to have an easy conquest, the men being too much exhausted by their fatigues during the gale to paddle with any swiftness, and we had lost our only means of defence, for all the powder we had on board was too wet to be used. The enemy were not, it appeared, aware of our being so near to them, as for some time after Arismendez had discovered them with his night telescope they did not use any effort to come up with us, though they were steering nearly the same course as ourselves. The crew having declared their inability to use the paddles any longer, we had hoisted the sails and

were endeavouring to escape before the Spaniards could notice us. The chance was but slender, and the consequence of our being captured we knew was certain death, therefore the time was one of some anxiety. Arismendez swept the surface of the ocean with his glass every moment to ascertain their movements, but still he did not imagine they saw us, though they were evidently gaining on us. Thinking, however, that we must soon be discovered, we agreed to lower the masts at once, making all that it was of consequence to preserve fast to the bottom and thwarts of the flechera, and then had recourse to an Indian trick often played under similar circumstances, which consists in overturning the boat, leaving the bottom upwards. Ourselves and the crew, as is the practice, got underneath, and supported our heads above the water, in the body of the vessel,—which afforded us sufficient room to breathe in,—by holding the thwarts and ring-bolts by which the luggage was secured.

Here we remained till we found that a boat had been lowered from the ship to find out what we were. The Indians, being excellent swimmers, were continually watching every movement of the enemy, till they came so near as to make it hazardous for them to remain longer out of the boat. With intense anxiety we waited their approach, but they did not come close to us, for

the officer seeing only the bottom of the boat, observed in our hearing that he supposed she had been upset in the hurricane, and that the crew had perished. To our relief he put back to the ship and sailed on their intended course, which seemed to be to a little island called Coche, near Margarita, where the Spaniards sometimes rendezvous'd; and, when the Indians had ascertained that all danger was over, we righted the flechera, and resuming our seats, reached Pampatar, on the 16th May, in safety. Madame Arismendez, who was then residing with the lady of General Clementi, was agreeably surprised at the arrival of her husband, and a succession of entertainments was given by his friends to welcome him, which served to pass away the time till the arrival of the long expected Devereux.

CHAPTER IV.

Arrival of General Devereux—Father O'Mullin—Appearance and deportment of the General—His splendid regimentals—Landing at Margarita, and ludicrous accident—His gasconade at a public entertainment—Author proceeds with General Devereux to Kingston, in Jamaica—The General's reception there—Author returns to Margarita, and is made the bearer of despatches to the President Bolivar—Truce between the Independents and Royalists—Various opinions as to the motives of Bolivar—Author sails in a small sloop to receive stores at St Domingo—Captured by the Spaniards and carried to a settlement in that island—Escapes by connivance—Recaptured, and carried into Carthagena—Carthagena described—Close imprisonment and cruel treatment—Condemned to death by General Morillo—Manner in which he was to have been executed—The Girrotte—Assisted with means of escape—Escape on the night before the morning assigned for his execution—Safely reaches a vessel waiting to receive him.

TOWARDS the evening of, I believe, the 20th of January, a small brig, bearing English colours, was observed to be making for the harbour, and it being immediately supposed that this was the vessel bearing the object of our expectations, I was desired by General Arismendez to go on board and ascertain if he were arrived. Accompanied by a military officer, I made for the brig, which had in the meantime come to an anchor outside the harbour. I was struck with the filthi-

ness of her appearance, as she had been taken from the coal trade for the voyage, and apparently had not been cleansed since her late occupation. On her stern was painted "The Mary, of Sunderland." I went on deck and was saluted by a jolly-looking old fellow with a nose of a deep rubicund tint, who was walking the deck, and who asked me fifty questions in an instant. This personage proved to be no other than Father O'Mullin, an Irish Catholic priest, who had been induced to join the retinue of Devereux, at the recommendation of the celebrated orator, Mr Daniel O'Connell (whose son accompanied the leader as aid-de-camp) under the title of Chaplain to the Irish Legion, and private confessor to its promoter. Father O'Mullin, with much ceremony and circumlocution, informed me that General Devereux was on board, and requested me to go below into his cabin to see him.

Accordingly I descended, and saw the General seated on a kind of stool with his elbows leaning on a dirty table, and his head resting upon his hands, the picture of despair. His hair and dress were in the utmost disorder, without the least regard to cleanliness, and the most intense anxiety was portrayed in his countenance. He arose, and in a hurried manner put several questions to me, from the tenor of which it was evident that he considered the ship seized, and himself under an

arrest. I endeavoured to ease him of his apprehensions as soon as possible, by telling him my orders from General Arismendez were to inform him that he should be received with military honours, and begged to know whether he would go on shore that night or wait until the ensuing morning.

This information at once dispelled the cloud which had hung over his countenance, and he gradually assumed his wonted air of importance. Bridling himself up, and vainly attempting to conceal the emotion of extreme joy which visibly agitated him, he commenced one of those long speeches for which he is so famed. It lasted above an hour, although the purport of it was only to express his sense of the attention shewn him, his gratitude, and resolution to be ready to go ashore at ten o'clock the following morning.

I left him, receiving many thanks and professions of regard, which were repeated in a tenfold degree by the loquacious Father O'Mullin, who officiously attended me to the ship's side. Next morning, at the time appointed, I went again to the General, who was far from ready. This arose from the time he took to equip himself for the occasion, and the total ignorance of himself and suite of the method of arranging military appointments, the General and most of his staff (as he termed them) never having been attached to any

army. I was requested to assist, but being as ignorant as themselves I referred them to the officer who had accompanied me, and stood aloof a silent spectator of the amusing scene before me. The General's dresses were all soldered up in tin cases, that the lustre of the lace and bullion might not be diminished by the damp during the voyage. He was busily engaged in opening them when I entered the cabin, and when fold after fold of fine wrapper had been removed, we could just discover between the parts covered by the trimming, which was still enveloped in tissue paper, that the colour of the uniform was blue. At length all was clear, and we beheld a most magnificent French field-marshal's uniform, so bedizened with lace that it seemed as if the owner had considered personal appearance of far more consequence in a war-of-extermination than discipline or strength of numbers. The trowsers were, to use a nautical phrase, iron-bound, that is, a very broad piece of gold lace went down each side, and they were otherwise splendidly decorated. The hat was the same as those worn by field-m Marshals of the French service, with a lofty waving plume, and the sword about as long as that of the renowned William Wallace, the hilt being studded with Irish diamonds, given him, as he said, by the corporation of Dublin.

Thus equipped, the finely decorated General

entered the boat, and we rowed ashore, where a guard of honour was assembled to receive him, the fort and two brigs of war saluting him as we passed. Here a fresh obstacle arose. The officer of the guard informed him that his sash was of the wrong colour, (crimson) the colour worn by the Independents being blue; and the only remedy we could contrive, was that of procuring a part of an old silk dress, belonging to one of the females of the island, to cover it with. The General now particularly requested that a handsome charger might be provided to carry him to the house of General Arismendez, and my companion offered him the one upon which he had ridden to the beach, which was a very fine animal belonging to Arismendez, but old and vicious. Mounting this horse he proceeded forwards, doing myself and the officer before mentioned the honour of requesting us to ride on each side of him, the remainder of the party arranging themselves in procession to follow. The day was fine, and the heat of the sunbeams, powerfully reflected from the sands, made it excessively hot. During the ride, Devereux having seen a pond of water which had descended from the mountains and lodged in one of the hollows in the low lands, observed that the horses seemed thirsty, and rode his own to the edge that it might drink. The animal, finding the element cool and comfortable, instantly plunged in up to

his knees and, maugre all the efforts of his rider to prevent it, laid himself down and rolled in it, splashing Devereux with the mud raked up from the bottom of the stagnant pool and leaving him to wade out at his pleasure. Thus bemired, the General mounted a mule and rode to the end of the journey, his splendid dress spoiled and scented by the effluvia of the pond. This untoward accident being remedied in the best manner that could be devised, he was received by Arismendez, and welcomed to the shores of Colombia, by means of an interpreter, as he did not understand Spanish. Soon after the party adjourned to the dinner table, and after the attack upon the viands had subsided, the health of General Devereux was proposed, when a ludicrous scene arose: Devereux, who had been longing for an opportunity to bring forth a long speech, with which he laboured, arose, and began an oration in English, of which none of his hearers, to whom he particularly addressed himself, understood a word. After haranging them for above two hours, he concluded by brandishing the huge sword before noticed, and threatening to hurl destruction on the enemies of Liberty, not only in Colombia, but in every other part of the globe. The most profound attention was paid to him, and having sat himself down, the interpreter, who was the officer who had been sent with me to receive him, arose

to perform the arduous task of translating it, in which he was interrupted many times by the General desiring to add something more which he conceived necessary. Such as, "Tell 'em, I'll destroy every Spaniard in South America; tell 'em *that*;—say, that all Ireland is up in their cause, in consequence of my representations,—tell 'em *that*;"—until the officer getting completely tired, observed, "You must wait till you can tell them yourself, General, for I never talked so much before in my life." The General was however much applauded for his oration, though inwardly laughed at; and elevated with the attention shewn him, he sat down with ineffable self-esteem.

After remaining some time at Margarita, General Devereux prepared to go to Kingston in the island of Jamaica, whence he said he should ship vast supplies of arms, ammunition, and other materials, for the service of the Republic. These representations induced General Arismendez to send me with him to receive them in the name of the government, and to superintend the shipment of them. We therefore sailed; but as soon as Devereux had landed, the corporation of Kingston threatened to proceed with severity against him unless adequate reparation was made for the losses they had sustained by the lawless band he had sent out. His situation was now a difficult one, and I was

requested to endeavour to bring the affair to some conclusion less unpleasant than he apprehended. I however failed of success, and finding that the representations he had made respecting the stores were incorrect, and that the time allowed me for staying on the island (six days) was expired, I returned to Margarita, leaving him to settle the matter through the medium of his own friends.

I found all the flecheras waiting for me at Pam-patar, and having received the despatches from Generals Arismendez and Clementi, for Bolivar, I went up the Oronoco at the head of nine flecheras of different sizes, manned by nearly 850 blacks and Indians. Arriving at Maturin, I found no person of any authority there, and therefore went on to Achaquas, where I was informed that his Excellency had just taken up his head-quarters on his return from Cucuta. On this occasion I left the flecheras on the Oronoco, under the command of the next officer, who was a brave young Englishman, named Cobham, but somewhat rash and inattentive to consequences. I learned at Achaquas that Bolivar, according to the intention he had expressed to Arismendez at Maturin, had marched to the vicinity of Rosario de Cucuta, in order to force the Royalist army under General la Torre to an engagement. Having found them encamped there, he had ordered an attack

the next morning ; but during the night, having unaccountably changed his mind, he quietly marched back again to Lake Guas, without disturbing them ; and thus exhausted the strength of his troops, by giving them a harassing march through a bad country to no purpose. After having broken up his encampment and made his preparations for the march, Bolivar received a message from La Torre, who acted for General Morillo. The latter, seeing that he must be eventually defeated, was still anxious to effect a reconciliation on the terms he had before proposed, and accordingly an interview was requested by La Torre, and a meeting granted. At this interview it was agreed that a cessation of hostilities should take place for one month, and that during such period the lives and property of both parties should be respected. This circumstance occasioned much clamour in Venezuela ; and the warmest of the friends of the President deemed it impolitic, as it could not be denied that, had he obliged the Royalists to come to an action, the troops he had with him were more than sufficient to have destroyed their whole force, and then Morillo, to save his own life, must have either fled or capitulated. Another party, more prejudiced against him, argued that La Torre was distantly related to the wife of Bolivar, and that regard for the interests of her family had induced

him to betray those of his country. Others, more impartial, attributed it to error of judgment and want of decision, rather than to any sinister motive; and the last, I should think, were correct.

Before his Excellency had departed for Cucuta, he had ordered Colonel Montilla to unite his forces with the troops under General Garcia, and to march to and invest the city of Carthagena, which was then the most important place in the hands of the enemy. Montilla obeyed, and was there when I arrived at Achaguas, but it having been a stipulation in the terms subscribed to by Bolivar and La Torre, that the troops should be withdrawn from Carthagena, orders were sent to Montilla to retire towards the province of Santa Martha, until the receipt of further directions.

The time of the cessation of arms was occupied by both parties in strengthening their forces, and preparing for an obstinate struggle for victory. It was foreseen that Morillo was expecting some troops from Spain, which was one of the causes which led him to obtain the cessation; and Bolivar, who now saw his error, was using every effort to surmount the obstacles created by it. With this view he despatched instructions to the Republican agents at Halifax, Trinidad, Jamaica, and other places, to send all the stores they could command or raise, by the time appointed for the renewal of

the contest. I was ordered to go in a small sloop of seventy tons (then undergoing repair at Angostura) to Jacquemell in the island of Santa Domingo, and to the places just named, to receive on his behalf the stores, and to superintend the shipment of them; and also to contract with any person willing to furnish vessels for the use of the government during the war. Soon after receiving these orders, I started for Angostura, and sailed from thence immediately, the vessel being ready for sea. Under an impression that no attempt would be made by the Spaniards to capture any of the Republican vessels, Bolivar had desired me not to wait to arm the sloop, as it would necessarily take up some time, the requisite materials not being at command; and I therefore went on board without any means of defence.

After encountering a smart gale on my way from Trinidad to St Domingo, I was with much difficulty beating up to the port I wished to make, when I was seen through the dense fog which prevailed at the time by three large Spanish schooners of war, with which my vessel was of course unequal to any contest, had it been offered; but the Spaniards adopted a different method of getting her and myself into their possession. An officer was sent in a boat, who requested to see the papers belonging to the sloop, which I shewed him,

and having previously hoisted English colours, he quickly saw the deception; but civilly requested me to sell him some flour, of which he said the schooners were in want. When I had given him three barrels, which was nearly all I possessed, he requested me to accompany him, and his commander would either pay me in dollars, or barter with me, as he had some very fine wines on board. I accordingly went with the intention of getting some wine for General Arismendez, but had no sooner reached the deck, and was spoken to by the Spanish captain, than a man behind me struck me violently on the back of my head with a handspike, and I fell. While under the stunning effects of the blow, I was carried below and put in irons, and, as I was subsequently informed, the crew of my vessel were put to death, and the sloop sunk.

I was conveyed to the settlement maintained by the Spaniards in the island of St. Domingo, where immediately on my arrival two Spanish officers, belonging to the force driven out of Savanilla, deposed to the fact of having seen me in arms against the Royalists; I was therefore, by command of the Cabildo, confined in a narrow chamber, in what might have been originally a fortress, but was then unfit for any resistance. The governor of the place, named O'Regan, a descendant from Irish parents, who had domiciled

in Spain some years before, immediately visited me, and upon my explaining the cause of my capture, he was strongly inclined to favour me; but either he had not the power to let me escape, or, if he had, was afraid to act upon it. He however sent me a disguise by his own servant, and I contrived to get out the following day with his brother, who came to see me with a servant in a dress exactly similar to the one sent me, in which I had attired myself, leaving the man in my stead. By an arrangement made by the governor, I was enabled to get on board a brig bound for Montego Bay; but before we had got out of sight of the harbour, the alarm was given of my escape, and the same schooners which had conveyed me to the island were sent in pursuit of the brig, as it was known no other vessel had sailed that day. I had not been on board twenty hours, when some shots were fired to bring the vessel to, and we were soon after boarded, and the master of the brig, to avoid the consequences which he dreaded would accrue to himself, instantly gave me up.

I was now again put in irons, and safely conveyed to Carthagena, whence there appeared little hope of my ever getting away. I suffered every privation and insult that could be inflicted, during the passage, and was landed, tied hand and foot, with ropes and with chains fastened round my neck, that weighed nearly a hundred weight.

Upon being taken to the Royalist commander, he spoke to me in terms of some commiseration, and ordered me to be taken to a small fort belonging to the town, which stands without the walls of the city of Carthagena, and directed my irons to be removed, and every attention shewn me consistently with my safe keeping, till my trial took place. I was accordingly conveyed thither, but in no other respect were his orders complied with; I was still kept to the ground by the weight of my chains, which, from my exhausted state, I could not raise. One end of them was made fast to an iron bar, which ran across the floor of my cell, by means of a ring which, sliding on the bar, enabled me just to crawl along the extent of the breadth of the place, and to go about a yard and a half from the ring. The cell was about nine or ten feet long by six or seven wide, the floor of stone was my only bed, and that was covered with the water that had dripped from the walls, which were always streaming from the excessive damp.

In this miserable state I remained, during the first four weeks of my confinement, on an allowance of three plantains and half a pound of cassavi bread per diem, when the commandant, having received a letter from O'Regan, who was known to him, and had endeavoured to interest himself in my favour, came to me and was asto-

nished to find me in so wretched a situation. By his orders I was instantly removed to a somewhat more commodious room, where a bed was prepared for me and a medical man sent to attend me; the Spanish officer, with a good deal of humanity, himself superintending the care that was bestowed upon me. I was then so reduced by what I had endured, that I was unable to stand, and it was some days before I could leave the bed without assistance. By the help of a nourishing diet I soon gained sufficient strength to walk about the apartment and to make arrangements for an attempt to escape.

The city of Carthage is situated on a narrow peninsula, and is almost surrounded by bogs. It is also very hot, but is not so unhealthy as might be imagined from its situation; indeed, I believe the climate is generally deemed favourable to Europeans, as the exhalations arising from the marshes are always carried off by the pure sea breezes. It is scarcely necessary for me to add that the very untoward circumstances under which I was detained there, prevented much particular observation on my part, and I can therefore give but a faint outline of it, which however may be relied upon as correct so far as it reaches.

The city within the walls, as it is termed, is extensive and well built, and is surrounded by two lines of fortifications, which are separated by

a narrow piece of water, over which several draw-bridges are thrown at equal distances. There are many barriers, but they are all more or less weak, and could easily be overcome. There is also a fort, termed San Lazaro, near the city, which might be rendered almost if not quite impregnable, by fortifying a lofty hill of a conic shape, and covered with a thick brushwood intermixed with the prickly pear. This hill has been the means of compelling the city to yield several times; and yet those who have successively had possession of it have never been at the trouble of erecting any fortification to secure it from invaders. At the time of my detention, there were the ruins of a monastery on its summit, fast crumbling into dust, which were visible from the loophole of my cell. The town outside the walls is also very large, but is neither so well built or defended as the city itself. There is a beautiful harbour, of immense size, and about two miles and a half from the city there is an excellent roadstead.

It appeared, that the schooners having returned to St Domingo, O'Regan had learnt from them the circumstance of my recapture, and, being instigated by his sister-in-law, who was an Irish-woman, had written to the commandant of Carthagena to induce him to connive at my escape. In a fortnight after the receipt of his letter, his

brother and the wife of the latter came purposely to see me, in order to counsel and contrive my flight. The commandant being fearful that, if I got away in such a manner as to make it appear that he knew of my intention, his own life might pay for it, kept aloof from the affair altogether, which would throw the blame upon the jailor. General Morillo was then absent with the Royalist army, and I was waiting his return for my doom, of which there could be little doubt when the sanguinary nature of his measures on such occasions was considered.

At the expiration of seven weeks of the most painful captivity that can be imagined, I was, agreeably to the intimation previously received by the commandant, though it had been kept secret from me, visited by another of O'Regan's brothers, with an Anglo-Spanish officer, his lady, and two merchants of English extraction, who had all joined in the attempt to save me, at the hazard of their own lives; for, had they been taken by the Republicans on their passage, they would have been put to death, as the war was renewed. They came under the pretence of contracting for the supply and conveyance of some stores and clothing for the Spanish troops, and their visit to me was confided to the commandant alone. On the second day after their first visit, two of them came to me with the comfortable

information that Morillo had returned; that my fate was fixed on without the troublesome form of a trial, and that two days only were allowed me to prepare for death. They added, that the only chance now left me was to make an effort to escape, either that night or the following one, and giving me a hundred dollars to bribe the centinels, they left me, with the assurance that a vessel should be in waiting in the offing to receive and take me without delay to the island of Jamaica.

It will be readily imagined that I lost no time in preparing for my departure, which I began to do the same night. I attempted it without the aid of a bribe, fearing that if my intentions were made known my operations would be more narrowly watched, and the slender hope I had left would be blasted; as I knew the universal treachery of the soldiers, who, most likely, as soon as they had received my bribe, would have taken me again, to get another from Morillo.

With the help of the side rail of my bedstead, which was composed of iron, and very strong, and which with much labour I had wrenched from the head and footposts, I removed two of the massive bars of the same metal which guarded the little window, or rather loophole of my cell, and found that I could thus make my way to the ramparts,

which immediately overlooked the beach. This labour however occupied so much time, that daylight was fast breaking when it was finished, and I was compelled to relinquish the furtherance of my scheme till the next night. I accordingly replaced the bars of the loophole as neatly as possible, and again put the side rail of my bedstead in its place, fastening the tenons of it into the sockets of the posts with strips torn from my shirt, so well, that when my keeper arrived in the morning with my daily allowance of provisions, nothing was observable to create any suspicion.

I was still in bed when the jailor entered, and fast asleep, from the fatigue of my nocturnal exertions. He awoke me by a shake, to tell me that a priest would be with me in an hour to administer the blessings of his faith, and would accompany me the following morning to the place of my execution, the method of which I was then, for the first time, made acquainted with. Among other engines of destruction a machine, called a girrotte, had been sent from Madrid, for the more convenient or diversified manner of putting the captives to death; and as this machine had as yet never been used, Morillo intended me the honour of being the first who should receive a quietus by its means. It is composed of a chair, in which the condemned person is obliged to sit; at the

top of the back of it, which is about equal to the ordinary height of a man's neck when sitting, is a piece of wood hollowed out in a semi-circular form, to which is fixed, by means of hinges, another piece with a corresponding concavity. At the end of the latter is a worm made to fit a large screw attached to the former, and when these pieces meet there is about room enough for the neck of a child. The back of the prisoner's neck being made to go into the hollow of the first piece, the second is adjusted to it, and the screw turned by the executioner, who stands behind, and thus the victim is strangled. I was also told by my kind attendant, that the Royalist troops would be gratified by the sight of portions of my body on the highest points of elevation in the city; in short, he did not neglect anything which could add to the unpleasantness of my feelings; taunting me with recollections of my country, and desiring me to write farewell letters to my friends. I thanked him for his information, and affected more emotion than I felt, that he might not have any idea of my intentions. With a look of exultation he left me, and I made a hearty breakfast of the viands he had brought me, and, to do them justice, I had not been starved since the personal interference of the commandant. Soon after breakfast the confessor made his entré, and was proceeding to exhort me to a full acknowledgment of my sins, but thinking that would

occupy more time than I could spare, I civilly declined his proffered services, and he left me.

Few people, but those who may have been placed in similar critical circumstances, can conceive the length the day appeared to me, and the alternate vacillations from hope to fear, as to the success of my enterprise, which presented themselves to me. That one day of suspense appeared longer than the whole of my previous imprisonment; and the intervals between the changing of the centinels, though only two hours each, seemed without end. At length I heard the delightful music of the evening gun, and directly afterwards the footsteps of the half-starved ragged scoundrels marching along the ramparts to relieve the guard. At that moment all my apprehensions rushed upon me with greater force than they had hitherto done. I knew not the height I should have to descend from the ramparts, and had no materials of which I could avail myself to aid me in it that were strong enough. I might be perceived, or the bottom I might have to fall upon might be of such a nature as to cause my death in the attempt. All these and many more ideas flitted across my imagination in a moment, and all vanished by the time the relieved soldiers returned. As soon as all noise had subsided, and darkness had thrown her veil over the place, I cautiously removed the bars and sallied forth about an hour after the relief, taking the dollars with me to provide for

accidents. I passed the first centinel fast asleep, about three or four yards from the opening of my cell, and took his musket, resolving that the first Spaniard that approached me should receive its contents. I, however, fortunately got safely to that part of the ramparts I wished to gain, without meeting with any interruption, and at once threw myself over. The height was, I should imagine, about thirty feet, and I had a heavy fall; but luckily I descended on a rather soft bed of mud which nearly surrounds the outer town, and sank into it some distance, but not far enough to endanger suffocation. The concussion was very severe, and so stunned and deprived me of breath, that I could not for several minutes extricate myself from my miry couch. At last, getting clear of it, I crept along to the water's edge, still firmly grasping the musket, which I had not relinquished, where I saw the boat of the vessel appointed to receive me, and in a few moments was safe on board, and on my way to Jamaica, under the colours of the Spaniards.

CHAPTER V.

Arrival at Kingston—Generosity of the Copamandant O'Regan—Sails for Angostura—Ordered on an expedition—Capture of Fort Cienega—Receives the command of a native force—Encounter with La Torre—Cowardly desertion of the native troops—Desertion from the army of La Torre—Ascendancy of the Patriot cause—Motley troops under the Author's command—Their rapacity and insubordination—The President plans an expedition against Maracaibo—Vacillation in his determinations—Author ordered on a service—Ordered to halt in an unhealthy situation—Joins the President—Meets with a serious accident—Depression of the Royalist forces—Impolitic concession of the President—Interviews between Bolivar and Morillo—Their extraordinary deportment to each other at an entertainment—Armistice agreed upon—Nature of the terms—Author proceeds to Angostura—Visits General Arisméndez—Sails to Maracaibo—Description of that city and its environs—Indians of the surrounding country—Treachery of General Delgado—Ill-treatment of Mrs English—Navigation of the lake of Maracaibo—Grant to the British Colombian Agricultural Association—Origin of the name of Venezuela.

WHEN I reached Kingston I immediately went to the house of a merchant named Carruthers, to present a letter of credit, which had been given me by the master of the vessel, by the orders of O'Regan, by whom it was written, to provide me with anything I might require. Without this act of extreme kindness and consideration I should

have been in a destitute condition, as I had again lost all I possessed when taken by the Spaniards. As soon as I had equipped myself, I engaged a small sloop of thirty tons to take me to Angostura, where I arrived about the 28th of August 1821, but so weak and ill that I was unfit for any duty. I was not, however, allowed much time to recruit, for in less than forty-eight hours I was ordered to take the command of a body of Sambos amounting to about 700, which was united to a party of English sailors, who had deserted from Brion's fleet just before, making in the whole nearly 900.

With this force I was directed to go to the plains of the Apure, where some part of the Republican army was then preparing for a campaign, and were only waiting for some militia which had been raised in the interior by General Navano, and were expected to join them daily. As to my former force, it had been commanded by an English officer, who was killed at the head of them, and the men were nearly all sacrificed.

During the time of my captivity the insurgents had been very successful in their efforts on the re-commencement of hostilities, and had received many additions to their strength, as the natives generally took care to espouse the cause of those who were best off. Not long before I reached the capital, the President had despatched a vast

quantity of troops to the province of Santa Martha, whose object it was to gain possession of the town of that name, and to drive the Royalists from the province. In the former attempt they had succeeded, except as to the completion of some terms relative to the capitulation which were insisted upon by the inhabitants; and they were fast completing the latter.

When all was ready for my departure for the plains, the news of a contemplated expedition against fort Cienega, about nine leagues from Santa Martha, arrived from the latter place, with a request that some addition to their force might be sent to the Cienega river instantly. I was therefore ordered to proceed to join them on that service. Flecheras being prepared, I sailed, and on my way between the gulphs of Paria and Venezuela sunk four Spanish vessels. On the banks of the Cienega river I joined the troops that were destined for the attack, who had just arrived from the town of Santa Martha; they were a native battalion under La Reina, who had previously joined the Patriots on the banks of the river Tuy. The fort is not very strong, and was taken on the 11th of October, after a severe action of about three hours, in which the Royalists lost upwards of 400 men; and during the pursuit, which was continued by the Independents, 700 more were put to death. The native troops

escaped with comparatively trifling loss, and of my party not more than 100 blacks and a dozen Englishmen were killed; a small number, when the obstinacy and temerity of the Sambos are considered.

The next day the terms proposed by the natives being yielded to by Admiral Brion, who had recently arrived, Santa Martha was given up to the Patriots with due formality. I was now joined to La Reina's corps, and received a party of raw undisciplined natives, amounting to 600, raised in the province of Santa Martha. They were put under my command, to go into the interior to attack the Spaniards, who were dispersed in various directions, their leaders being uncertain which route to take to avoid destruction. A series of skirmishes occupied the first fortnight of our expedition, during which two, and sometimes three, occurred daily, a description of which would only be irksome, as the circumstances of them were necessarily similar. At length we arrived within a few leagues of Perija, whither we had pursued La Torre, who, with a party of his troops, amounting to nearly 3000, had fled with great eagerness towards the lake of Maracaibo. Having come up with him, we immediately commenced an attack upon his worn-out force, but I was at the first onset deserted by the whole of the natives who had joined me at

Cienega. I had placed them in such a situation as to receive their share of the enemy's fire, and they at once fled. I now anticipated nothing less than the speedy slaughter of the whole of the blacks, who I knew would never yield a step, and the rest with them; but fortunately for us the whole of the troops under La Torre had been but badly paid and worse fed for some time before, and this, joined to their recent harassing march, had put them into anything but a good humour for fighting. They had not made above half an hour's stand, when one entire battalion laid down their arms and came over to us to volunteer in the Independent service. Glad to see such a favourable turn, the brave sailors, and the no less courageous blacks, pushed on with greater energy, aided by La Reina's corps; on which the whole of La Torre's troops fled, and left the field to a force which, had there been a mutual confidence between them and their commander, they could have destroyed with the greatest ease imaginable. As they were principally cavalry, excepting those who had deserted, we could not pursue them, and after going some miles down the lake, they contrived to get shipping for Caraccas. La Torre retired for safety to that town, as the diminution of his troops by repeated desertions, previous to the instance I have just alluded to, rendered it necessary for him to resign the field until he could receive reinforcements.

The Patriot cause was now assuming a most favourable aspect. The Spaniards, being put to the rout, and dispersed in various parts of the country since their late defeats, were reduced to wants quite as appalling as any that the Republicans had previously suffered. Above 3000 of them, at different times and places, had fled to the Independent standard, taking with them their arms and everything besides that they could get hold of, to ensure a good reception; and the natives, now perceiving that the government was likely to gain the ascendancy, were fast declaring for liberty in all quarters. The cantons Guaca and Canagua declared themselves ready to join the Patriots in the destruction of the Royalists, to whom, but a few weeks before, they had afforded every assistance and had made every promise of fidelity. The event of the annihilation of the Spanish army was now indeed looked upon by all parties as certain, and expected almost daily.

La Reina now left me in the exclusive command of my men, taking his own corps to the canton of Guaca. I was still however numerically strong, as in pursuing a fragment of La Torre's division, I had been joined by above 500 natives in the province of Zulia, in addition to those who had before united themselves, and others who had returned after the skirmish with the Spaniards. Several hundreds more subsequently volunteered, making

in the whole a respectable force, if they could have been depended upon, which however their arrant cowardice made impossible. Such a set was perhaps never seen as that I now commanded, consisting of upwards of 2,500 men of different countries, complexions, habits and clothing, each quarrelling for precedence, and all but the English vying with each other as to extent of plunder and carnage. To restrain them in these practices was no easy matter, and I soon found that it was of little consideration with them whether those they robbed were friends or enemies. Nor was this the end of the evil; for the division of the spoil generally occasioned disputes that frequently terminated in personal conflicts, in which many of them were killed. The only method I could devise was that of setting the Sambos and British to watch the rest; and in this duty they were obliged to shoot many of the Spaniards, who were certainly more inclined to rapacity than any of the others.

Bolívar having contemplated an expedition against the city of Maracaibo, his Excellency ordered all the troops in Santa Martha and the adjoining provinces, and those remaining on the Apure plains, to unite with his own for the purpose of marching against it. Couriers were despatched to the various commanders, directing them to assemble on the banks of the lake of Maracaibo, by the 5th of October; but, before they

could reach the point proposed, other messengers were sent off to countermand these instructions, which, before the expiration of ten days, were renewed and again contradicted. I mention this to shew the uncertain and vacillating conduct observed by the chiefs, who were ever changing their intentions and coming to fresh determinations. Having no regular system of their own, and not submitting to any that was laid down for them, they acted merely in opposition to each other in almost all instances, and their movements were generally the results of a momentary impulse, created by the disasters or successes of their competitors. Few of those who composed the intriguants ever issued an order on the most trivial occasion, without altering it as in the instance above related, two, and often three and four times, even at great risk to themselves and men. The courier who had been sent after me bore written directions for me to remain stationary till further orders. These of course could not be evaded, though in the situation I happened to be in when I received them, they were extremely hazardous and disagreeable. I had just crossed a marsh in the province of Zulua, which, like all places of the same description, particularly in Colombia, exhaled a considerable quantity of effluvia, the baneful effects of which on the health of European troops, in causing intermittent fevers, are but too

well known; nor are the natives much less susceptible. Added to this, the vicinity was very barren, in consequence of being thinly inhabited, from the cause just mentioned, and therefore destitute of provisions, for which, in all marches through the interior, the troops are indebted to chance alone. I had no alternative, and was obliged to form a temporary encampment on the very margin of the bog; and although my stay was not more than ten days, I lost above two hundred men (chiefly Spaniards) who either died on the spot, or soon after the commencement of our march.

At the end of the period above-mentioned, I received orders to march to join Bolivar, which the debilitated state of my men would scarcely permit them to do. On joining him, I found that the destination of the army was in the direction in which it had been ascertained Morillo had proceeded; but it was speedily changed to another, and subsequently, for a few days, it seemed a subject of doubt where we should go. A short time served to settle the affair; the scouts, which were out in all parts, having informed the President that the Spanish forces were concentrating near Santa Anna, under General Morillo, who intended to make a stand there, it was resolved to move on towards him as fast as possible. With this view, his Excellency directed the unorganised part of

my force to be severely drilled, to render them more effective; and while this was going on, directed me to go to General Paez with despatches, urging him to push forward and join Bolivar at the earliest moment he could. In this however I was foiled; for having, on the second day of my journey, mounted a vicious mule, the animal, in making an effort to throw me, fell over a rock into a pit about eight or ten feet deep. In the fall my left shoulder was dislocated, and I also received several severe contusions, particularly in the head. Happily a party of Indians came up, who paid me what attention they could, and conveyed me back to the army. Another officer was necessarily sent to Paez, and the army moved on towards the spot occupied by the Royalists.

It being known that General Morillo's forces were much inferior to the Patriots, and that both their commander and themselves were greatly dispirited in consequence of the ill success of La Torre, whose army might be said to be destroyed, it was fully anticipated that the revolutionary war must come to a speedy close; and the battle to which it was given out that Bolivar intended to force the enemy, would be the last action of any importance that the Spaniards could ever maintain. I have before observed that La Torre had retired to Caraccas with the remnant of his force; and owing to a continuation of adverse circumstances, he was

compelled to remain there in an abject condition, from which there appeared no chance of relief. The few men he had with him, and those under Morillo, amounting together to about five thousand men, were almost all that were in Venezuela; therefore there could not be any reasonable expectations of the prolongation of the contest, as above sixteen thousand troops could have been brought together at that time by the Republicans; and almost every province and district throughout Colombia had declared its readiness to furnish troops for the extermination of the Spaniards. The policy of his Excellency the President, however, rendered it far otherwise, and extended the struggle for liberty three years longer; whereas, in the opinion of those most capable of judging, it might have been terminated in as many weeks.

The troops having reached the end of the march, which was a plain about one league from Santa Anna, instead of proceeding to action, as had been anticipated, were permitted to remain in an encampment, totally inactive for some days, during which several messengers were despatched by the opposing generals to each other with amazing rapidity. General Morillo had taken up his quarters in Santa Anna, and the end of this correspondence was an invitation from the Spanish Chief to Bolivar, to meet him at an entertainment given at the quarters of the former, in order to adjust the

differences between the contending parties. The officers of his Excellency's staff were also invited, as were the other generals and their suites; and Bolivar having a short time previously attached me to his staff, I was included.

The politeness of his Excellency not permitting him to refuse this invitation, at the appointed time (the 25th November) he rode in all the "pomp and circumstance of war," to the scene of the banquet, where he was received with all due formality by the Royalists. The feast was commenced after a tête-à-tête enjoyed by the two chiefs, after which a few preliminary compliments passed to each other's prowess and talent, which were the only topics discussed till the viands were withdrawn. This done, a due number of briezoz were drunk to the future good understanding of the two Generals, and to other sentiments congenial with their feelings, when the effects of Morillo's wine began to manifest itself in the behaviour of both parties. After their healths had been successively proposed by each other, they, as if by mutual desire, arose to embrace, according to the custom of the country; and the men who, for years, had been the most inveterate enemies, and had each essayed to surpass his antagonist in the slaughter of their respective countrymen, now hugged and kissed each other in the warmest and apparently most cordial manner.

This scene lasted for some minutes, during which the Republican officers were lost in astonishment and disgust. A temporary cessation of these embraces having succeeded, they once more began to pour forth their compliments and expressions of friendly regard and esteem, after which the kissing was again renewed. Finally, each being completely intoxicated, a briazo was given to the healths of both Generals at once, by their order, and according to custom the glasses were dashed to pieces on the table, which they then severally mounted again to embrace each other. Unfortunately, their motions not being very steady in a sort of *pas de deux* which they were dancing on the table after the embrace was over, it suddenly gave way, and they abruptly descended to the floor, where they rolled for some time, until picked up, still embracing each other with the greatest vehemence.

The chiefs being carried to a bed-chamber, they slept in the same room, and all retired till the next morning, when the second part of the consequences of this friendly compact was made known. Bolivar and Morillo, during their correspondence, had nearly completed the terms of an armistice, which was finally agreed upon during the interview previous to the festivities of the preceding night. It was stipulated therein that the war should cease for six months, during which the treatment observed by both parties towards each other should

be such as was authorized by the laws of civilized nations; that from the date of the armistice (25th November 1820) the war-of-extermination should cease for ever, and the contest, if renewed at the expiration of the term mentioned, should be prosecuted according to the usages of other countries; that two deputies from the government of the Republic should accompany General Morillo to Spain, in order to arrange, if possible, with the Cortes, for the permanent establishment of their independence; and lastly that the city and port of Maracaibo should remain in the hands of the Royalists; but that it should be left open for the convenience of all persons going from Venezuela to Rosario de Cucuta to the meeting of the general Congress, as that was the most direct course they could take.

All these things being settled, and the ratification of the terms completed, the Patriot army was ordered to march to their old quarters on the plains of the Apure, and to remain there till their services were again required. My own orders were to take the Sambas to Angostura, after which I had permission from his Excellency to dispose of myself as I thought proper during the interval. Thus left at leisure, I intimated to him my intention of going to Cucuta, to present claims in favour of the late Major Beamish for the consideration of the Congress, and requested that as the troops which had been furnished by the Major had been

exclusively under his Excellency's command, who could of course better appreciate the services they had rendered to the Republic than any of the other members of the government, he would be pleased to give me a document in testimony of his sense of the service performed to his country by my deceased friend, and that he would recommend the affair to the notice of the Congress. This however he declined to do, because, as he said, he had in all his reports of his movements in New Grenada to the government mentioned the Major's battalion in such a manner as to render the circumstances of their arrival in the country well known to all the New Grenadian members of the Congress, who would at once audit the claims with the greatest liberality.

With this assurance I left him, and arrived at Angostura, whence I sailed to Margarita, intending to pass a few weeks in the society of my esteemed friend General Arismendez, in order to recruit myself for the long and laborious journey I had to perform. I experienced the same cordiality and kindness from the worthy General as he had ever shewn me, and found that he had been making preparations for my arrival, as he had anticipated a visit from me as soon as he heard of the armistice. I landed the latter end of December, and passed nearly the whole of the month of January with him in the most agreeable

manner. Words could but very inadequately express the sense I must ever entertain of the treatment I experienced from this inestimable man. To his father-like solicitude and attention I owe the general restoration of my health; and the recollection of his kindness can never be effaced.

Finding myself recovered, I sailed for Maracaibo, where, after crossing the extensive lake, I intended to take mules for Rosario de Cucuta, for the impressment of which I had previously obtained a warrant from the President. Passing through the gulph of Venezuela* from the Caribbean sea, appears the castle of San Carlos, which is strongly fortified, in defence of the entrance of the lake, with the surface of which the lower tier of guns is nearly on a level. There is also a shifting-bar impeding this passage, which renders an attempt to cross it without a pilot extremely hazardous. A strong breeze sets dead into the lake, causing at the mouth a heavy swell, which has been known to lift a vessel over the bar even after she had grounded; but it more frequently happens that, in beating out or going in, the force of the swell drives her against the bar with such violence as to dash her into pieces. After sailing some miles through the neck of the lake, the city of Maracaibo opens beautifully to the view on the

* Called the gulph of Maracaibo by the natives.

right, standing on the curve of a romantic bay, whose silvery ripples lave a fine yellow shore, above which the city, as seen from the waters, forms a most noble crescent. It is large, and contains a beautiful cathedral of extraordinary dimensions, with five churches and two convents, besides many handsome and spacious edifices. The whole is built of a hard description of stone, of a dazzling whiteness, which when the sun-beams shine powerfully upon the buildings, as they do at most times, the effect produced, in union with that of the scenery around, is enchanting. It is like most other Colombian towns, not paved; and curving along the bright gravelly shore, it extends nearly three miles towards the point which terminates the bay, being shaded in its progress by many rows of luxuriant cocoa trees. These groves are usually found a pleasant retreat during the mid-day heat, which is in the city excessive, but under this shade the refreshing breeze, which even in the hottest season of the year blows from the lake, is fully enjoyed. Here parties of the inhabitants assemble to take their siestas in alcoves formed for the purpose, and to partake of the milk of the cocoa-nut, of which as many can be gathered as they please, by sending men up the trees for them. Beyond the environs of the city on the other side is an extensive promenade, to which they resort in the evenings for exercise, and

beyond this a number of neat little cottages are dispersed over the scene, which gives the whole a very pleasing effect.

The country round for many leagues is a continuation of immense forests and deep morasses, which no human being but the wild Indians have ever traversed. These people, who have never bent to the yoke of tyranny, and were ever alike free from restraint from both Royalists and Republicans, chiefly inhabit what is termed the Guahira country, by which the gulph of Venezuela is bounded to the westward. Here, deeply secluded in the almost impervious mazes of their native woods, they have for ages retained their independence; and the principal losses they have sustained have been when the Spaniards have forcibly carried off any of their countrymen to compel them to labour in the mines. They are a fine tall muscular set of people, but withal very weak, and incapable of enduring much fatigue. In disposition they are generally mild, harmless, and inoffensive, and, from the little traffic they have with any of the cities of Venezuela, are totally uncivilized and unsophisticated. They are divided into many clans or tribes, each of which has its chief; yet so peaceable are most of them that they are never at war with, but always rendering little offices of kindness to each other, being, indeed, unacquainted with any weapon of

offence. The head of each tribe is generally an old man, who daily sets forth the experience he has gained to the junior classes, exhorts them to a brotherly union and regard for their fellow creatures, and inculcates the practice of divine worship, of which they seem to have an instinctive idea. They regard the sun as the Supreme Being, to whom they attribute all the little events of their lives.

The city of Maracaibo, as before stated, being allowed to remain in the possession of the Royalists by the terms of the armistice, they had appointed General Delgado, one of its natives, governor. This officer had formerly deserted from the Patriot service to the Royalists, into whose hands he had betrayed the whole of the troops he commanded, who were put to death. In the beginning of February 1821, just before I reached it, he treacherously re-sold it to General Urdenetta, who is a native of the city and then acted as the agent of Bolivar, for fifteen thousand dollars, and the latter took possession of it in violation of the treaty, and put many of the troops which were left to garrison the city to death. Some of them had been previously ordered out by Delgado, and the remainder were massacred by a native battalion called the *Toradores*. Delgado was, however, taken by the Spaniards in his attempt to escape into New Grenada with his ill-gotten treasure, and with two

of his brothers was put to instant death. I had not heard of the fate of the city till the pilot boarded the sloop I sailed in from Margarita, and I afterwards saw the Independent flag waving from the towers of San Carlos.

Maracaibo was at that time visited by many of the persons who had claims upon the government, amongst whom was Mrs English, the widow of the General of that name, who has been mentioned in the early part of this work. She had suffered many insults from persons belonging to, or connected with the government, since the death of her husband, and only the night before I reached Maracaibo, a native contractor for supplies of stores to the Congress had offered her the grossest treatment, and was only prevented from proceeding to open violence by her determined conduct. She was an heroic woman, and possessed a degree of fortitude, under all circumstances, seldom equalled.

I staid in the town some days, in the hope of meeting with some vessel to convey me across the lake, without going by the usual conveyances. The general method of navigating the lake is by means of small flat-bottomed boats, termed piraguas, which are worked by disproportionately large square sails, which, with their masts, are struck on entering any of the rivers, where the fresh gale which prevails on the bosom of the

lake is entirely lost. In some parts of these rivers, which are all very narrow, the branches of the lofty trees on each side intermingle and form a natural variegated arcade of exceeding beauty, which, although it delights the eye, causes an apprehensive sensation by no means agreeable, from the conviction that thousands of the most venomous reptiles are lurking in the overhanging shade, whose every bite is followed by certain death. Myriads of small snakes are seen coiled up in the foliage of the trees, to the beauty of which they add by their great variety of colour, while more huge ones are waiting either on the banks, or suspended from the branches, ready to make their fatal spring. Here the piraguas are worked in the same manner as the boats on the river Magdalena—by poling. It is not a pleasant mode of travelling, as the passengers are always very numerous, and are necessarily huddled together under a canopy, nearly melted with heat and devoured by swarms of mosquitoes. Not much relishing these comfortless conveyances, I embarked in a small schooner for Monporo, a very small Indian town at the extremity of the lake: the latter is perhaps the finest piece of water in the world both as to extent and scenery.

Near this lake is the tract of land which was granted by the Congress to the Joint Stock Company, formed in London, under the title of the

Colombian Agricultural Association. The surface of the country being for many leagues low, swampy, hot, and consequently unhealthy, it is of course totally unfit for the purpose, as the existence of European labourers would be inevitably terminated in a very short time under such circumstances. The land would certainly prove fertile, if properly drained and cleared of the immense quantity of wood growing upon it, and if labourers could be found whose constitutions would enable them to undergo the severities of the climate; but there are many other spots which are unquestionably more calculated for English agriculture than that located to the Company. These however the government will take care to preserve. It may indeed be looked upon as certain, that little in Colombia will be parted with which the authorities consider worth keeping.

It is the custom with all vessels belonging to the lakes of Maracaibo to rest every night, and we therefore anchored at sun-set in a small bay where innumerable shoals of the finny tribe were continually sporting in their native element, their glistening whiteness forming tracks of light by their reflection of the moon-beams. A cluster of fishermen's huts showed their lowly roofs upon the shore, making the quiet retreat of a hardy race secure in their poverty, happy in their stations, and uninterested in the storms which had

so long and so powerfully agitated their country. The silence of night was interrupted by the roars of hundreds of waterfalls issuing through the deep ravines in the distance, dashing in fierce grandeur from their lofty beds from rock to rock, the noise creating a thousand lingering echoes in their passage; while at intervals was heard the plaintive warbling of a native sailor boy, who, while he kept his watch on the deck of a small vessel near us, carolled forth a Spanish air with great sweetness and simplicity.

In the morning we weighed, and after coasting all day came again to anchor, at nightfall, at the mouth of a small shallow inlet which branches from the lake and runs up to Monporo, which is very small, and merely contains a sort of post-house for the reception (I cannot say accommodation) of travellers, where relays of good mules and horses are provided by the government, free of cost to its members and officers. It is used only as a resting place for the muleteers and couriers, and is under the controul of a person who is styled the commandant, and resides in a superior kind of dwelling. About a cable's length from the shore, above the water, are seen several Indian cabins of singular construction. Four large piles are driven perpendicularly into the bed of the lake, leaving the top about twelve feet above the highest water mark. They are driven into the

bed at equal distances, in the form of a square, and on them is raised one of these ingenious little habitations, each corner of it resting on one of the piles. They are thus protected from the snakes and other reptiles which abound in the muddy marshes on the shore, and are also exempt entirely from the filth of the town and its vicinity, and in a great measure from the noxious effluvia which constantly exhales from the bogs. To the piles are fastened their canoes and fishing implements on their return from their excursions up the lake. These habitations were the means of giving the name of Venezuela to that province originally, because, in the opinion of the Spanish invaders, they resembled the city of Venice in the manner of their erection. They named it accordingly, and the term soon extended to that part of the Republic so called at present.



CHAPTER VI.

The author sets out for Rosario de Cucuta—General geographical description of the territory of Colombia—Cordillera of the Andes and their operation on the confirmation of the country, and on its climate—Admirable facilities for internal navigation—Journey to Betrogena—The Cockinillo, or water-horse—Arrival at Timotes—Jovial priest—Description of Timotes—Hospitality and eccentricity of the village Padre—Description of the Paramos, or deserts—Their effects on the animal system—Means of avoiding the consequences—Startling proof of the danger—Perilous effect on the author's servant—Dangerous road—The author's capote—Curious assemblage at a cottage—Honesty of the natives vindicated—Remains of the city of Merida—Its destruction by an earthquake—Pig-hunting—Description of the Cabolos—Arrival at Las Gistas.

AFTER resting a night at the post-house, I procured mules for myself, servant, and baggage, to prosecute my route, and the cavalcade moved forward, consisting of two led horses, six saddle and baggage mules, my dog, and the peons, or guides, who serve the double purpose of taking the traveller through the most direct roads, and of conveying back the mules when done with. These formed the whole of my little caravan, with which I commenced a journey over the wildest

mountains, through the most gloomy forests and deep ravines of Colombia, in which all the varieties of climate nature produces are experienced ; and in the space of a few hours the traveller is scorched beneath the rays of a burning sun, and shrinks benumbed in an atmosphere so intensely cold, that not even the natives, daily accustomed to the trial, can exist without the severest exercise. I shall present to the reader a rather detailed description of this journey, as it tends to give a general picture of the interior of the country, and will afford an adequate idea of its peculiarities.

In so vast an extent of country as that contained in the Republic of Colombia, it is but reasonable to imagine that there is to be found a great variety of climate, and diversity of natural productions. The territory possesses on the Atlantic ocean, above 2000 miles of sea coast ; while that on the Pacific, is calculated at about 1300. The interior of the country is irregularly divided by the Cordillera of the Andes, which is the cause of imparting those striking peculiarities of temperature and soil which so eminently characterise it. This stupendous chain first rises in the province of Quito on the Pacific, and continuing on towards El Assuay, there attains the height of from 15 to 20,000 feet, having its lofty summits perpetually covered with snow. From it spring several irregular branches in its course towards the isthmus of Panama,

and from these issue at intervals volcanoes, which send forth torrents of flame and lava, destroying every semblance of vegetable life, and at times threatening destruction to the surrounding country. Another ridge, equally stupendous but more uneven and varied, divides the lovely and fertile valleys of Cuca from the river Magdalena, and going on through the province of Antioquia, terminates at a short distance from the town of Monporo. The most considerable chain of all is that in the eastern district, among the lofty mountains and winding passages of which, the amazing number of streams produced by the flowing of the waters in the rainy seasons, take their source, and which, descending on the plains, become united and compose the rivers Meta and Apure. These continually running into the Oronoco for several weeks with undiminished torrents, have the effect of swelling that majestic river so as to render the immense surrounding level country a complete inland sea during four months of the year. Other links connected with the same chain, but of less importance, stretch through the provinces of Merida, Maracaibo, and Ocana, and end in the snowy mountains of Santa Martha. The effects of these lofty ridges have been such as to produce configurations to the country, which bestow upon it the influence of many zones. The sea coast is in all parts hot, and in some unhealthy, and the

soil is of a kind of loose sinking sand, which is naturally unfavourable to agriculture; while at the elevation of from 4 to 5,000 feet above the level of the sea, the air is pleasant and salubrious, the soil extremely fertile, and the productions numerous. These spots are also quite free from the noxious reptiles which are so destructive to the life and repose of man in the warmer parts. As the altitude increases to about 2,000 feet, so the heat becomes more intolerable; but at a greater height, it rapidly changes to a colder temperature, and at the rise of 12,000 feet, no person can live. The immense tract which comprehends the extensive plains of the Apure, and includes the province of Varinas, is mild and healthy. It contains some immense forests, which abound with timber of magnificent growth, and nature appears to be equally productive of animal as of vegetable life. Here wild beasts and reptiles flourish in every way that can contribute to the annoyance of the human race, while the more useful animals are furnished in such a manner as to supply all its wants. On these savannahs are bred the herds of wild horses and other cattle, which, previously to the war, baffled all attempts at calculation, but they have necessarily diminished during the progress of the Revolution.

No country in the world can be better watered, or more capable of having its inland navigation

brought to the highest perfection, than Colombia in general. The whole of the interior, excepting only the province of Coro, is everywhere beautifully diversified by romantic rivers and streamlets, of which, in a march of 200 miles, above thirty will be crossed, on an average, in any part of the territory except the province just referred to, in which the want of water is sometimes severely felt.

From a delay that had occurred in procuring the mules I required, it was nearly evening before I left Monporo. My next stage was Betrogena, distant about fifteen leagues, through a thick forest, growing out of the deep swamp which surrounds the lake. There is only a single extremely narrow passage through the otherwise impenetrable brushwood, and this, from the constant traffic carried on by its means, and the wetness of the soil, is rendered one line of mud, into which the mules sank in some places to the girths, as we literally waded through it. About midnight I reached a hacienda, which being the only resting-place between Monporo and Betrogena, I availed myself of it to rest the mules and to take some refreshment. My hammock was slung in an open corridor, at the end of which my servant took up his abode, the peons sleeping in another part of the building. All had quietly resigned themselves to sleep, when about 3 A. M. the clatter of hoofs disturbed us, announcing the arrival of some

strangers. The peons, apprehending that they were part of the numerous gangs of robbers who infested the forests and mountains, came in breathless with terror, to beg that I would conceal myself in a place to which they would conduct me. Upon reconnoitring, I perceived there were only three of them, and challenged them with the usual "Qui viva?" "La Patria" was the reply; and it proved to be one of Bolivar's aides-dé-camp, with two peons, carrying despatches to Urdenetta at Maracaibo. He had been attacked during the night by a gang of robbers, but had escaped from them without injury. After a quarter of an hour's conversation and a congratulatory cup, he passed on his way, and at day-light I resumed mine.

After continuing through the marsh till late in the day, I came to an almost perpendicular ascent, which in about three hours I winded up, and reached a fine tract of high land, at the commencement of which stands the town of Betrogena. The contrast of climate I experienced here, as compared with that I had just left, was equally surprising and agreeable. From a dense and sultry noxious atmosphere—occasioned by the exhalations from the vast extent of bog, which powerfully affects the lungs, and causes a great depression of the animal spirits—as soon as the mountain breeze caught our heads on approaching the top, it suddenly varied to one clear, cool, open,

and refreshing, which gave the whole party great relief. From this height I enjoyed a full view of the lake and the adjacent country, and had unfortunately but too much time to contemplate it, as I was detained here till the following day, for a fresh supply of mules.

Finding that I should probably be kept here some days, as none of the inhabitants seemed inclined to accommodate me, I made use of the power allowed me by the warrant I possessed, of impressing the cattle of the civilians. Arming the peons, who eagerly joined in the expedition, that they might be allowed to return, I set forth in search of some mules, and seized upon some which I perceived carrying merchandize to the interior, which ultimately proved to belong to the merchant who had so grossly insulted Mrs English at Maracaibo. He had arrived at Betrogena, where he was obliged to stay, in consequence of the death of some of his mules, through the fatigue of such a hasty flight as he had made; but having succeeded in purchasing others, he had left the town as soon as he was informed of the arrival of an officer from Maracaibo, fearing that he might be punished for his brutal behaviour.

Having overtaken him, I called out to the muleteers to stop, but upon hearing my voice, he fled at full gallop, leaving the whole of his property in my hands. Taking it back into the town, I

selected what mules I wanted, and gave up the others, with their burthens, to the Alcalde of the place, making him give me a receipt for them. I now immediately proceeded on Escugwa, three leagues off; but, as the delay had brought on night, I found it difficult, having no peons, to keep the road, that lay through some very intricate mountain passes, which the darkness of the night occasioned me several times to mistake.

About 2 A.M. I reached the valley in which the little town stands, and upon entering it knocked up the Alcalde, who had long retired to his repose; and not wishing to do the owner of the mules I had made free with more injury than was absolutely necessary, I requested a fresh supply of cattle, which however could not be granted till the following evening. I waited till that time, when, taking a receipt under the Alcalde's hand for the borrowed mules, I proceeded to have the fresh ones loaded; but one of them, being restive, started off, and fell with her burthen over the brow of a mountain close behind the town, killing herself, and dashing the trunk she bore to atoms. I travelled all night towards Timotes, along the banks of a beautiful river, shaping its course through a serpentine valley, which was bounded by high mountains, rising in various places in an amphitheatrical form. Soon after day-break, I observed a party of Indians busily engaged in hunting a

species of animal, termed in some parts of Colombia the *puerco de aguas*,* and in others, the *cochinillo* and the water-horse. To the latter it bears some slight resemblance in the shape of the body, but about the head and neck it is much like the former. It is commonly very fat, particularly at the top of the neck, while it is frequently fifteen inches thick. They are esteemed by the Indians good eating, but are rather too strong for European stomachs. They are easily killed, as upon hearing any noise they thrust their heads into any place capable of covering their eyes, leaving their bodies perfectly exposed. One blow of the *machetti* generally divides the spinal marrow, after which, such parts as are wanted for immediate consumption are roasted at once, and of the other *tassao* is made. The fat serves for many purposes: among others, a good oil is extracted from it, which burns in lamps with exceeding brightness.

About 7 A.M. I arrived at the village of Los Puertos, where I breakfasted, and after resting the mules two or three hours, again went on. I now began to ascend the tremendous chain of mountains—their towering heads lifted far above the clouds—stretching for several leagues between Los Puertos and Timotes. Here, for some distance, I found the climate to vary from a temperate, to an

* Water-hog.

almost insupportable degree of heat, which again changed, as I advanced higher, to an equal degree of cold. Going on, without stopping, over these rugged and barren excrescences of nature, I reached the summit of them just before sun-set, and cautiously descended the steep declivities on the opposite side. About 10 P.M. I reached the entrance of the narrow valley at whose mouth the village of Timotes lies. Here my progress was again impeded by the usual obstruction—want of mules. The Alcalde, after expressing his regret at not being able either to procure me any that night, or to accommodate me with a lodging, recommended me to go to the house of the Padre, as being the best the place afforded. I did so, and found the priest a kind, hospitable, good sort of man when sober, which, by the purple hue of his capacious nose, appeared to be very seldom. He gave me a hearty welcome, and quickly ordered the best of everything his house afforded to be laid before me. He then pressed me to make huge sacrifices to Bacchus, and, with a little hypocrisy, veiled his own propensity, under the wish to do justice to the brave English, the “Libertadors of his country,” as he termed them; and certainly, if being toasted in every form his fertile imagination could devise for the sake of an excuse for drinking, could do them justice, they had no reason to complain. At length, becoming completely

inebriated, he quietly went asleep on his chair, from which he fell on the floor beneath the table without waking, and I left him in a happy state of unconsciousness to take a few hours' rest.

In the morning the Padre, notwithstanding his drinking bout, rose early and requested me to take a walk round the village, in which I was forcibly reminded, by the general appearance of it, of one of the neat little hamlets so common in England, and almost fancied myself back again there, when the Padre presented me with some apples and cherries from his garden, species of fruit which I had not seen since I had left that country. Timotes is capable, from the nature of its climate, of producing every description of English fruits, vegetables and grain—wheat, barley, rye and oats were growing abundantly, considering the size of the place and the number of the inhabitants. The ears of wheat were surprisingly large and full. There were also cabbages, peas, potatoes, and other vegetables, in a very forward state, and many of them were prepared, by the orders of the hearty old priest, for my dinner. The whole of the fruits were submitted to my taste; they were very fine, far exceeding any that I ever saw in England, both as to size and flavour; the cherries in particular were immensely large, but it is the characteristic of the climate in the milder parts of Colombia, to greatly increase the

magnitude of European fruits when cultivated there..

The good Padre gave me an excellent entertainment, and then, as before, began such a furious attack on the bottle, that he was in a short time completely intoxicated. He arose to compliment me, and to desire me to convey his thanks to the remainder of the British officers in the Colombian service, for their assistance in the cause of liberty; and, while in the middle of a long harangue, one of his servants came into the room and interrupted him. He now became outrageous, and thrashed the offender severely; not being satisfied with this, he descended to the apartments occupied by the rest of his domestics, and beat them all round; and after having demolished nearly the whole of his crockery, he unluckily thought of the manner in which I left him the preceding night, and came up stairs to quarrel with me for it. I laughed at him, when he grew more vexed, and threatened to inflict the same kind of chastisement upon me as he had practised on his servants. I consequently thought it more prudent to retire to my room than to have any altercation with him, and left him to get quiet again. This however he did not choose to do, for, throwing up his window, he caused such a riot, and called so loudly for assistance, that the Indians conceived the stranger was about to murder their priest. Under this apprehension they

flew to arm themselves with their machettis, and sallied round to the back part of the house to effect an entrance.

Having received intelligence of their movements from one of the servants of my good-natured, but half-mad entertainer, I despatched him at once to the Alcalde, with an order for the immediate deliverance of the mules. After some trifling excuses they were sent, and being quickly loaded, I soon left the Padre's residence in the rear, and certainly not without some fear of having my throat cut by the infuriated Indians, who were still at the back of the house forcing their way in, while I escaped at the front. The Padre, although drunk, was not quite blind, and perceiving my departure, roared out lustily from the window for me to return, apologising for his late conduct; but as I made no answer, he grew more enraged, and threw all the bottles and glasses, and every other article within his reach, after me, and did not cease while I was in sight of him. I regretted leaving him so abruptly, for he was a worthy old fellow at heart, though his head was too hot to render a longer stay either safe or agreeable.

It being late when I left, I stopped at a thinly scattered village about four leagues from Timotes, situated at the foot of a mountain paramo. Here I was obliged to procure a shelter for the remainder of the night, not only from the cold,

which had increased to great severity, but that the mules and peons might be refreshed and ready to proceed up the height at the first dawn of morning; for, if benighted in these dreary wilds, it is impossible to escape being frozen to death. A paramo signifies an uninhabitable desert, in which no human being can exist without being kept in unceasing and violent motion. No artificial means are strong enough to sustain life while exposed to their inclemencies. The most ardent spirits are entirely void of any good effect, and generally increase the direful consequences. There are many of them in Colombia, and they generally lie amidst immense mountains, principally the Cordillera of the Andes, or a branch of them. They are usually long, deep valleys, between the highest elevations, so shut in and obscured by the neighbouring hills, as to possess all the severities of their extreme height, without one ray of the sun to shed its genial influence through them. To remain in them unsheltered at night is now never attempted, former experience proving that death certainly follows; but in some, which from their extent require two or three days to cross, small houses are erected at the expense of the district in which they are situated, wherein cooking utensils and other articles of convenience are kept for the accommodation of travellers, and stabling for their mules,

Here they stop and light fires, which they sleep before, and are thus partially secured from the pitiless blast, though the effort to remain for many hours, even so screened, is very painful.

The manner in which they operate is as follows: The highly rarified air occasions at first a great difficulty in breathing, with a sharp piercing pain at each inspiration, scarcely to be borne. This in time amounts to nearly an impossibility of respiring, and the unhappy persons so affected (who are termed by the natives "emparamentos") are suddenly benumbed in the extremities, owing to their incapability of continuing in motion. Soon after this, they are seized with violent raving and delirium, and, in their horrible paroxysms, froth at the mouth, tear the flesh from their hands, and arms with their teeth, pull their hair, and beat themselves violently against the ground, uttering the most piercing cries, till quite exhausted. The cold then soon deprives them of all motion and feeling, and death comes as a seasonable relief. The bodies are in all cases much swollen, and a great distortion of the features is produced by the dreadful convulsions they suffer before death, the whole surface of the skin being discoloured and nearly black. The only remedies ever known to have effect, are severe scourgings, and the drinking of cold water found in springs

in the paramos; but these remedies must be employed immediately after the first symptoms appear, or they are useless.

It may perhaps afford some idea of the severity of these wildernesses, when it is stated that, upon one occasion, upwards of five thousand horses and mules were collected by the orders of Bolivar, to carry the baggage of his army destined for the conquest of New Grenada; but in crossing the paramo of Pisba, only seventy of them escaped death, and nearly five hundred of the troops shared the same fate. There are some paramos which, for nine months in the year, cannot be entered. In November, December, and January, the hunters of wild cattle generally go into them to take the herds of deer, &c. which at those times resort there for pasture.

With the first peep of morning light, myself and party were mounted, after having partaken of some roasted plantains and milk of the cocoa-nut, which was the only fare the place afforded, and we continued riding, as fast as the strength of the mules would permit, the whole day. I had not gone far, when I saw two horses and their riders stretched before me in the icy grasp of death, having sunk before they could reach the extremity of the paramo, though it was not half a mile from them. I made as light of the matter as possible, to avoid increasing the fears of my party, and hurried past.

About 3 P.M. we were all so benumbed, that it was with difficulty we could retain our seats; and my servant, who had eagerly drained his brandy bottle, was by far the worst. I began to fear that he must be sacrificed, and desired one of the peons to go forward and endeavour to find a spring, while the other and myself stayed with him to inflict the other part of the remedy, viz. flagellation.

In a short time, the foremost peon returned with the information, that there was a spring a little way on, to which he urged us. We reached it, and dismounting, contrived to force him to drink some water, which he did, but seemingly with great pain, and he soon perfectly recovered. I then tried the experiment myself. The torturing sensation attending the attempt, I can only conceive to be like that which would be produced by forcing a quantity of needles down the throat, tearing the skin and flesh in their passage. I soon felt the benefit of it, however, in a comfortable glow of heat, which spread equally all over me; and remounting, I rode forward gaily, and met a party of natives, who informed me that the worst part of the paramo was passed; but they deceived us. As night closed in, at which time we commenced the descent, I experienced a change in the atmosphere, as severe as it was sudden. Dim vapouring clouds hung midway between us and the plain we wished to reach, while others, scudding rapidly

over us, left their freezing moisture on that part of our faces necessarily exposed to it; and before we arrived at the end of the journey, the skin literally peeled off, as if scalded. To diminish our speed was dangerous, and to continue it equally so: it was the choice of breaking our necks, or of being frozen to death.

The passage made here for the mules was on the edge of a precipice above a hundred feet in depth, and the path they had to go upon not two feet wide, and so rugged, that each step they took threatened to cast the whole of us over: to add to the discomfort of our situation, it was so dark that none of us could distinguish the deep ruts into which the mules' feet were continually slipping. It was here that I found the benefit of my capote, a species of cloak more remarkable for its utility than its elegance: it is of simple construction, being merely a square piece of cloth with a hole cut in its centre, barely large enough to admit the head of the wearer, and in general warmly lined throughout. The material of which it is composed varies according to the taste of the person it is intended for, or perhaps more often to circumstances. Mine, owing to a scarcity of cloth at Maracaibo, where it was made for me, was merely two English blankets, very large and thick, sewed together; and these are always more comfortable than any other, as they will resist a surprising

quantity of rain. When riding, they descend below the feet, and thus give equal benefit to all parts of the body, at the same time affording a covering to the horse or mule which carries the wearer. When sleeping in the woods, they are quite as useful: the hammock being slung from the branches of trees, a line is passed immediately over it, on which the capote is hung, descending over each side of the hammock, and the hole in the centre being tied up, the rain runs from it as from a slated roof.

About ten o'clock, I reached a peasant's cottage at the extremity of a paramo, and duly appreciated the comforts of a large fire, which blazed in the centre of the floor, and the pleasurable emotions arising from the certainty of having passed the danger. Some cocoa and plantains being prepared by the host, I found them most acceptable after a hard ride of about eighteen hours. Having seen the mules well provided, I went to my repose for the night. There was but one room in the cottage, in which five Indians, the peons, my servant and myself slept; and at about midnight, or soon after, we were joined by another party of six Indian muleteers, who were going to pass the paramo the following day. I mention this fact, because the natives have been represented by many of the officers who have served in Colombia, as dishonest, and capable of any deed to enrich

themselves, if in ever so trifling a degree. In this instance, they could have had no dread of detection, and moreover must have known that, had the fact been discovered, they would have escaped punishment, from the indifference always manifested by the government on such occasions. Neither could they have entertained any fear of being overpowered, as myself and servant could not have had a chance of contending successfully against thirteen men, equally well armed as ourselves. Some instances have certainly occurred, in which a few of the English have been killed by the natives; but they have invariably proved, on investigation, to have originated in some insult or injury offered by the deceased persons. In many instances, I have been with parties of the natives, in situations and circumstances equally favourable to such designs, had they meditated them, but never experienced any but the most obliging and disinterested behaviour from them. The party by whom I was surrounded, on the present occasion, regaled themselves with some chicha, * after which they filled their fortunas † with some maize, and shaking them violently, commenced a series of

* Drink made from maize, with about five parts water added to it, and fermented. It is then sweetened with molasses, and put into earthen jars for use.

† Calabashes.

movements which they termed dancing, varying them according to the quickness of the sounds of their delightful music. Some of these dances are intended to convey notions of war, love, &c.

In the morning early, I proceeded on to a little village two leagues off to breakfast, where, having refreshed the mules, I went on to the ancient city of Merida, formerly one of the most magnificent in Venezuela, but now a heap of ruins, and almost deserted, having been nearly destroyed by an earthquake in 1812, which was remarkable from the fact of its being felt at Caraccas at the same time. Passing through a beautiful verdant valley, the traveller ascends by a gentle rise to an extensive plain, on which the remains of Merida stand. It is one of the most enviable spots in Colombia, both from the great charms of its situation, and the salubrity of its climate, which has been generally considered to approach very closely to that of the South of France. Here are also all kinds of European fruits and vegetables growing at the haciendas in the neighbourhood, and in such abundance, that the plain may be justly termed the cornucopia of Venezuela. The city itself has but few inhabitants, and those of the poorer classes; but there are some respectable families residing at the farms near it. At one of these I rested one night, as mules could not be procured till the following

morning, and was welcomed with that warm hospitality which is the characteristic of the superior classes of natives.

Passing through the remains of some rich plantations and neat villages, which seemed to have been the dwelling of much happiness before the war had destroyed the residents and desolated the country, I arrived at an extensive forest, where I beheld numerous Indians, at different times and places, hunting the wild pigs. Pig-hunting in the interior of Colombia forms both a source of amusement and great profit, and is pursued by many of the more wealthy inhabitants as a diversion, as well as by the poorer classes, who dispose of the flesh to dealers in provisions, which they first salt extremely well. It is purchased by persons who reside near the banks of the great rivers, by whom it is exported to the United States and the Caribbee Islands in great quantities. The wild pigs are far superior in flavour to the domestic. They are chiefly hunted by dogs, who catch and hold them, while the hunter comes up and dispatches them with his lance or machete. These dogs are very powerful and sagacious. The largest will frequently hunt by themselves in parties, and are trained to return to their homes as soon as they have killed a pig, which they will do three or four times a-day. The pigs are small, generally weighing about sixty pounds, very fat, and delicious

eating. A hunter will kill twenty of them in a day, for which he receives a dollar, when he is hired to hunt by any of the purveyors of provisions for the season. Those who hunt them for the sake of the sport, go in parties of ten or twelve, armed with rifles, with which they shoot them; and this is far from an easy matter in the thick brushwood by which they are covered, as they run with amazing swiftness. Many good shots miss them, until practice has rendered them perfect in the sport.

Some large boars are also often found in the woods, which are extremely furious, and sometimes go in flocks. Upon such occasions, when a hunter happens to fall across their track, he is frequently surprised and overpowered, unless his pack is numerous and courageous. These he never ventures to attack when alone; but if he perceives one boar in what is termed his cubil,* he will approach him cautiously till within the distance required, when he throws his lance in the manner of a harpoon, and thus transfixes him to the ground.

Beyond the woods, the face of the country re-assumes the appearance of sterility; and for twelve or fifteen leagues, little excepting rocks and sands appear, without the least trace of vege-

* Lair.

tation. Not a habitation is discovered, and all nature seems to fly the place, which is not more than three leagues from the beautiful plain recently mentioned. The country continues the same till the Indian village of St Juan is perceived, which is a pretty place and neatly constructed.

Taking some refreshment here of the usual fare on such journies, cocoa and plantains, I rested the mules until the rising of the moon, when I again set forth, and in the morning got to a wild uncouth village called Astanguas, where I breakfasted, and then prepared to cross the *cabolos*. Cabolos are bridges of a peculiar make, used in Colombia to cross any precipice between two high mountains which is otherwise impassable; and to avoid them a great deal of time must be lost in pursuing another circuitous route, which is often impossible, from the incapability of the mules to proceed so far. The one I had to cross was over a precipice at least 150 feet in depth, at the bottom of which was a river formed by the rolling of the waters from the higher mountains, whose tremendous roaring, added to the other wild horrors of the place, render it an appalling passage to persons unaccustomed to them. The means by which the traveller is conveyed over are in most instances nine ropes made of bullocks' hide, well tanned and of a good substance, fastened at each side into the summit of the rock by means of sleepers, and

stretched to a proper degree of tension over pieces of wood, resembling the bridges of a violin. On these ropes, which are well greased to accelerate the motion of the passenger, runs another piece of wood in the shape of a crook, to which is secured a broad girth in the form of a loop, in which the traveller is seated, holding by the part nearest the crook. After leaving the first rock, he swings with terrific velocity to the centre of the cabolos, where the bending of them occasioned by his weight suddenly stops him. He is then suspended in what appears a most fragile support, over the deep chasm yawning beneath him, while the rush of the waters below assails his ear in a terrific manner; and unless he has sufficient nerve to behold his situation with calmness, giddiness ensues, and his grasp being relinquished, he is precipitated to the bottom. To the girth are attached small ropes leading to each side, and by these he is pulled by the natives to the point he is going to, by sudden jerks, each pull threatening to dislodge him. These airy bridges are not really dangerous while in good repair, but when after the rainy season they are not properly attended to, the constant wet, succeeded by the scorching rays of the sun, decays them, and sometimes many lives are lost by a neglect of the state of them. Horses and mules are passed over by means of slings round their bodies, and sometimes

their necks. The cabolos of Astanguas are considered the most lofty and hazardous, I believe, of any in the country.

I now continued forward over a fine level plain, bounded on each side by huge mountains for about sixteen leagues further, towards another village, which I arrived at late in the evening. Resting here a few hours, I went on again by the light of a fine full moon, towards La Gistas. The next stage was the most fatiguing I had yet experienced, both for the mules and their riders. I had to encounter another mountain paramo, equal in severity, though not in extent, to the first I have mentioned ; but I had in this instance the advantage of daylight the whole of the way, and entered the town of La Gistas in safety. Having travelled the two previous nights, I took up my abode here till the next day at the house of the Padre, a good sort of man, and what is not often met with, a sober one.

CHAPTER VII.

La Gistas—Author proceeds without a guide—Informed of a horde of robbers—Slaughter of travellers—Mode of living during journeys in South America—Bodies of slaughtered travellers—Respect paid to them by the natives—Arrival at Rosario de Cucuta—Description of that town—San Jose de Cucuta—Medicinal springs—Want of medical professors in Colombia—Diseases of the country—Elephantiasis—Barbarity of General Morales—Death of Dr Roscio—General Barino declared Vice-President—Assembly of the Congress at Rosario de Cucuta—Appearance and acquirements of the Members—Base treatment of Mrs English—General Devereux challenges the Vice-President—Arrest and imprisonment of Devereux—Arrest of the author—Brutality of the Vice-President—Termination of armistice—Movement of Morales and La Terre—Author and Devereux sent for trial to Caraccas—The Vice-President Barino's disgrace and death—Succeeded by General Santander.

LA GISTAS lies in a pretty little valley at the base of the mountain adjoining the paramo; and, before desolated and demolished by the war, it was esteemed a place of some importance, but is now nearly deserted. Some few of the original inhabitants are yet living at small haciundas in the vicinity; but they were very much impoverished, and afford melancholy proofs of the ravages of the Revolution.

On the following morning, the Alcalde being inclined to trifle with me, I was compelled to impress some of his mules, of which he had plenty; but the peons he proposed to accompany me were not at hand, having, I believe, been originally sent out of the way on purpose, I set forward without them, and commenced travelling on an unknown road without a guide. My reason for this was, that I feared to delay my arrival at Cucuta, lest the Congress should have finished the business of settling the claims. Fortunately I kept in the right direction, and about midnight reached a small house which served as a relief to the letter-carriers between Bogota and the other principal towns in the direction of the Maracaibo road. These are men who, throughout Colombia, carry the letters on foot with even greater swiftness than either a horseman or muleteer, as they are intimately acquainted with every near turn and cut in the mountains and forests, and penetrate through the most bewildering labyrinths and narrow passes, where a horse or mule could not be guided. When one of them reaches any of these little posting-houses, he finds another ready to take his charge, and therefore not a moment is lost.

Here I was strongly urged not to go further till morning, as my path lay through a forest infested with banditti, who were deserters from a Creole

regiment raised in New Grenada. To avoid a march through Venezuela to join Bolivar, they had fled to this forest, where they lay concealed, and subsisted by plunder, not daring to return to their homes through the dread of punishment. I was informed by the keeper of the house, that only two days before I arrived, they had murdered two men with their wives and children. As a further inducement for my stay, my host told me that I could never keep my road without a guide; and in the morning the mail from Maracaibo would arrive, and the man who forwarded it from that station would conduct me. I was therefore induced to stay for the remainder of the night.

When I arrived, both myself and servant were nearly famished, having only made one scanty meal at La Gistas, the Padre being very poor; and we had not tasted food of any kind since. I here purchased a small quantity of dulce (coarse brown sugar made into cakes), and a little gua-rope (juice of the sugar-cane), upon which and some maize I regaled myself and companion, reserving a small portion for the next day's journey. The mode of living on these excursions, in such a country as South America, must necessarily be very hard and uncertain. Fortunate indeed is the traveller, if, after a dripping wet ride of twenty-four hours, or even more, he can get a few roasted plantains and a little cocoa, and these

at an exorbitant price. Sometimes he may procure tassao, but that is a great luxury, rarely to be met with; and when it is to be had, seven and eight dollars a pound are demanded for it. The extreme poverty of the natives, and the difficulty they find in getting food for themselves and families, make them hoard up provisions of all kinds as if they were gold.

To be known to be an officer belonging to the government, is at all times sufficient to mark the traveller out as a proper subject for the exercise of cupidity. Whenever one approaches a dwelling, the women run to drive in all the poultry, and notwithstanding they are aware that he has seen them, they at once cry out, in anticipation of a demand, that they have none. This is accounted for by the abuse of the power which the government has invested in its officers, of seizing everything they may want, without payment, from any of the inhabitants, while on such journeys, and not, I believe, from any natural avarice. The native officers never pay for any article they require, always compelling the persons whose houses they enter to supply them; and if any murmur is made, their lives frequently answer for it. When I retired to rest, the proprietor of the house came to me with the information that he could procure me a gallina * of a person who

* Hen.

resided about half a mile distant; but that ten dollars were required for it. Glad to obtain a meal at any price, I agreed, and supped off as old a hen as ever lived; so tough, that at any other time it would have been thrown away as unfit to eat; my host at the same time congratulating me on what he termed my bargain.

The post having arrived, the next morning I started forward and entered the wood which had been mentioned by my host the preceding night, emerging from which the road lay through a range of inferior paramos, which with infinite labour and pain we wandered over for some hours, when we again entered a forest. Here I saw the place pointed out to me by the man of letters as the general rendezvous of the robbers when they expected any passengers, and a very fit place for such an assemblage it appeared. It was a narrow pass cut through the thickest of the wood on the side of an acclivity which we were then ascending, and about fifty paces from the top of it my talkative guide shewed me a small hut, a little out of a path cut to the left, in which he said the murders had been committed and the bodies then lay. He requested me to go there and pay the traveller's tribute, which is that of placing a stone on each of the bodies, which I did to gratify him, as I knew it was a custom never departed from by natives. Whenever a person has been murdered in

any part of Colombia, or has died on the road, no burial is ever bestowed upon him, but each person who passes by throws a stone on the body, and thus in time it is completely covered. This custom is always religiously observed by the natives, who hold it a great insult to the manes of the departed not to adhere to it. Bodies so covered are frequently to be seen in journeys through the interior.

We passed on without any interruption from the banditti, and soon lost sight of the melancholy spot. At dusk we arrived at a small town, perfectly jaded, and stayed there for the night. On rising early from my slumbers, I was informed that the peon who should have accompanied me, had overtaken me at this spot, and had driven back the mules to his master. I was therefore obliged to take one belonging to the town, and ride after him to get them again. He now went on with me till the animals could be spared. This day was, as I was informed, the last of my laborious journey, and I started with fresh strength and exhilarated spirits from that conviction. The road was still steep and mountainous, but the certainty of soon reaching the goal for which I had gone so many weary leagues, rendered the fatigues of this day comparatively light. After proceeding for five leagues through the brushwood passes of the mountains, I entered another Indian village on

a high tract of land very bleakly situated, where I procured the best supply of mules I had ever seen in the country. After partaking of a hearty breakfast of fried plantains and cocoa, I went on to Rosario de Cucuta, which was then only six leagues distant. After crossing several inconsiderable hills, I descended to a richly cultivated plain, of vast extent, on which the small town of San Antonio de Cucuta breaks suddenly upon the view, and beyond are seen the towns of Rosario and San José de Cucuta.

Here the climate varies again, and I soon felt the powerful effects of the sun, which quickly dissipated the cold sensation which had so long affected my limbs. The heat however grew oppressive, and was equally as distressing as the cold had formerly been, the transition being too sudden. From the first of these towns to the second, which was the seat of the government, it is only about two English miles, and I entered the government-house about 5 p. m.

Rosario de Cucuta, though small, is well built and compact. It has several good and wide streets, branching at right angles from a plaza in its centre, at one corner of which, passing under a large heavy stone archway, is seen the government-house, which is a commodious edifice, forming three sides of a square, the principal chambers and the hall of audience being in the centre. The

whole is but ill contrived, as the stables are in the body of the building, and only separated from the best room by a thin wall, and the passage leading to them is under the suite of apartments generally occupied by the governor. It surrounds a large paved court, in which stands a fountain. A little way further down the street which leads from the plaza next to the government-house, is the Hall of the Senate, as it was then termed, a low building with an arched roof, in which the Congress were to assemble. Three leagues beyond this, and on the same plain, which extends for near twelve leagues, stands San José, the largest of the Cucutas, and the most commercial. Here all the produce of the surrounding fertile valleys, which is chiefly cocoa, is laid up in stores, and thence sent over-land by mules to Puertos las Cachos, a branch of the river Zulia, communicating with the lake of Maracaibo, from whence it is conveyed in bungos to the city of the latter name. About two English miles from Rosario is a hot spring, whose waters constantly flow in a boiling state into two immensely large stone basins placed there to receive them, and overflowing from them it forms a rivulet, which cools in its progress. At the stream thus made the women from the three towns, and the cottages near them, assemble almost daily to wash their linen, standing in the stream and cleansing the articles by beating them against large stones

purposely placed in the water. The waters of this spring are considered by the natives as possessing many medicinal properties, and it is resorted to by persons affected with scrofula and other complaints, and many of the native empirics are continually sending draughts of it to their patients at a distance, for which an enormous fee is required.

It may be proper here to mention the great want of medical men of talent, and of proper medicines, which has always been felt and now universally exists in Colombia. Hundreds of its natives perish annually in consequence of not having any proper treatment, and a far greater proportion are for ever disabled and rendered helpless by improper remedies prescribed by the quacks, who practice the most ridiculous modes of treatment on their ignorant and credulous countrymen. The natives are peculiarly subject to ulcerated legs, which are but in a very few instances cured, and it often happens that mortification ensues, and thus the wretched sufferer's misery is terminated. There can be little, if any, doubt, that clever medical men, particularly surgeons, would meet with the most liberal encouragement in any part of the interior of the Republic, where the scarcity of them is more felt than along the coasts. I have known some of the most eminent of the English surgeons to receive from twenty-five to thirty dollars, and sometimes even forty, for an operation and a visit

in a distant part of the country. Elephantiasis, or swelled legs, known in Colombia under the name of the disease of San Lazaro, is astonishingly prevalent, persons of both sexes are often seen with their extremities so horribly enlarged, that they can scarcely drag them after them as they crawl on the ground by means of their hands. At Carthagena there was an hospital erected for the reception of those who were infected with it, but General Morales had the cruelty to set fire to the building, with the intention of burning *en masse* the unfortunate inmates; most of whom being unable to make any effort to escape, were consumed, and those who endeavoured to get through the flames were either shot or lanced by the Spanish soldiery, who were stationed around for that purpose. Bronchocele or goitres, is also a general disease in the mountainous districts of the Republic. Women are more frequently, it has been observed, so afflicted than men, and the enormous tumours are to be seen descending, in most cases in an elongated form considerably entangled at the extremity, to a length and size which is perhaps unparalleled in other countries. This horrible deformity is supposed to be caused by the strongly impregnated waters which descend from the mountains, containing the properties of minerals, and which are drank by the natives in great quantities.

But a short time before I reached Rosario de Cucuta, Dr Roscio, who had superseded General Arismendez as Vice-President of the Venezuelan Congress, had died, and General Anthonio Barino, a native of New Grenada, had been appointed to that station as regarded the general Congress of Colombia. This person had been previously on all occasions so strongly opposed to the politics of Bolivar that he had in several instances thwarted his schemes by raising insuperable obstacles to them. His Excellency had now however effectually quieted him by advancing him to this office, but his subsequent arrogance and unjustifiable abuse of power excited a general disgust towards him in the minds of all classes, and he was reduced to the only alternative of sending in his resignation to avoid the disgrace of a public dismissal. In consequence of a delay in his arrival, the meeting of the Congress had been adjourned for some time, and it had not assembled when I reached Cucuta.

A few days after, some of the members from New Grenada having arrived, the Congress was installed. There were but few of the members then in attendance, as many of them lived at such a distance from Rosario, that they could not get there in time. Those who had reached it presented nearly the same motley appearance as the members of the Congress at Angostura, the only

difference between the two being that these were somewhat better clothed, but far more ignorant. Many of the New Grenadian deputies could neither read nor write, and in this class were four or five general officers. The majority of those who were possessed of any information were priests, whose mercenary, narrow-minded principles, and superstitious caution and reserve threw an inquisitorial complexion over the whole proceedings. Some matters of minor importance having to be arranged, it was determined that those only should be discussed till the whole of the deputies should be on the spot.

I attended these debates for some days, and was much amused with them; not by the eloquence of the orations, but by the sullen taciturnity of the representatives, many of whom I observed, for three or four days successively, sat without uttering a syllable, merely voting as the leaders of their own particular parties had previously instructed them. It being imagined that the absentees would arrive in about five or six weeks, a day was appointed at about that time for the audit of the claims, for which I was obliged to wait. General Marino had invited me, in common with many other claimants, to take up my abode in the government-house till my affairs were settled; but after residing there about a fortnight, finding that my health grew considerably worse, I removed to

a small neat villa a short distance from the skirts of the town, where I had a set of apartments, with board and attendance in very good style, for one dollar per diem.

About this time General Devereux came here, to endeavour to establish a claim upon the government, and proceeded directly to Barino, who refused at once to acknowledge him as an officer of the Republic, and, with his characteristic brutality, ordered his servants to expel him from the house. The General was therefore in an awkward situation; for, having calculated upon being well received and entertained at the expense of the government, he had brought a numerous staff, with which he was obliged to lodge where he could.

Mrs English having joined the party of claimants, had not deemed it prudent to take up her abode, as she was intitled to do, at the seat of government, but had hired private lodgings at a house in the town. General Barino, however, prevailed upon her, under the pretence of commiserating her unprotected situation, to remove to his house, and being a man considerably advanced in years, she consented; but he had no sooner got her there than he made overtures to her of the basest description, and finding that she persisted in refusing them, turned her into the streets at midnight with brutal violence, without the means

of procuring a shelter. Devereux, who had not forgotten the indignities Barino had offered to himself, and had been only waiting for an opportunity of punishing them, made this an excuse, and called the Vice-President out. But the challenge was no sooner received than he was, by the orders of Barino, placed under close arrest till the pleasure of the latter was known concerning him.

The next day he was conveyed to one of the cellars which had always been used as receptacles for charcoal, and here he was kept forty-seven days upon no other support than bread and water, and so scant was the allowance of the latter, by the express desire of the malignant Vice-President, that, in order to allay the excessive thirst created by the particles of dust flying about his dungeon, he was obliged to drink the water he washed in. It being known that Devereux could not write Spanish, in which language the challenge was written, the suspicions of Barino fell upon an English officer, who was known to have been intimate with him, to implicate whom every effort was used. In this Barino failed; but as he felt certain that his suspicions were right, he ordered the officer to leave the town in twenty-four hours, without allowing him the privilege of establishing the claims he had upon the Congress.

While Devereux was thus incarcerated, I contrived to intoxicate the centinels placed over him, and passed some wine and provisions to him, as also some pencil and paper, that he might inform me how I could be serviceable to him. In this I was observed by another soldier on duty, a short distance from me, who informed the officer of the guard of the circumstance, and he conveyed it to the Vice-President. I was therefore arrested and taken before him, and was now suspected of being the writer of the epistle sent by Devereux. After ordering me to a similar confinement to that endured by the latter. Barino condescended to load me with every epithet his imagination could suggest at the moment, and concluded by calling me a traitor to the Republic. I remonstrated warmly, I must confess, upon the accusation thus conveyed, feeling that I did not merit it, and the only answer I received was an inkstand, thrown at me by Barino. Unable to bear this, I seized a small brass rod on which was hung a curtain surrounding his desk, and, before his attendants could prevent it, threw it at him in return. I was then removed to another cellar not far from the one occupied by Devereux, and there left to my ruminations.

I remained in this confinement six weeks, on an allowance of three plantains per diem, and a little coarse bread, with an insufficient quantity of water. During this period the hostilities com-

menced between the two parties, by mutual consent, rather before the expiration of the time agreed on by the armistice; but as there appeared no likelihood of any amicable termination of the differences between them, it was considered useless to delay further time in inactivity, and in reply to a letter from the President to La Torre, the latter agreed that hostilities should recommence on the 28th of April.

Bolivar now, I believe, made use of every exertion in his power to repair the injury done the cause by the interval of peace, occasioned by his treaty, and perhaps, for the first time, resolved that hard fighting, without the interference of diplomatic aid, should gain the contest. Some strenuous efforts were essentially requisite on his part, to atone for the time he had given to the Royalists to prepare themselves for the renewal of the war, which had enabled them to reinforce themselves in a great measure, though not to the extent anticipated by Morillo when he completed the armistice at Santa Anna. Still they could now muster a force which was far from contemptible, and under such men as Morales* and La Torre, who had succeeded

* This officer, who has been since appointed by the Court of Spain to the situation of Governor of the Canary Islands, was originally a servant to General Arismendez, and rose in the Spanish service from the ranks. Next to Morillo, he was the most active and enterprising officer that Spain ever had in Venezuela.

Morillo in the command, some successes on their side might be rationally expected.

Meantime Bolivar had not been idle, in his usual plodding manner, amongst the Chief Magistrates in the various provinces which were still inclined towards the Spanish Government. He had employed numerous agents in endeavouring to bring them over to his interests, which it must be recollected were also those of his country, and had succeeded tolerably well. The provinces of Cuenca, with the districts of Ilambato, Rio, Camba, and Quaronda, had declared for the Independents, and had volunteered to send supplies of arms and stores, if not men, which they could not promise, the natives not liking the idea of leaving their homes to fight for liberties which they had previously felt existed only amongst those in authority, and had reason to expect that they would be rewarded with perhaps still greater demands upon their humble means than even the Spaniards had of late years extorted.*

The first movement which Morillo and La Torre made, was to draw off their forces from Caraccas, and proceed with them, the former to Valencia, and the latter to Calabozo. In doing this they had left Caraccas with a very small

* The Republic was also at this time increased by the union of Rio de la Haina.

force to defend it, and the active Patriot, General Bermudez, having ascertained this fact, dashed in at the head of his few Guerillas, beat the Spaniards out, and took possession of it. The latter circumstance being known at Rosario de Cucuta, General Barino had determined upon sending Devereux and myself to Caraccas, that we might be tried by a military court-martial of natives for breaches of the martial law of the Republic. The General had been sent off before I was made acquainted with my journey, which was delayed a little time, in consequence of the attempts of the few friends I had acquired at Rosario to obtain my release. During my incarceration they had been unceasing in their endeavours, and through their means and representations petitions from all parts of the city had crowded the table of the Vice-President. The members of the Congress, who had assembled, were unanimous in the expression of the unjustifiable measure adopted towards me, and strongly urged that I should be set at liberty. Barino would not listen to them, and by an extraordinary stretch of power forced me to Caraccas. My previous weak state of health was rendered much worse by my imprisonment; and when I was brought out, and mounted upon the back of a mule, I fainted and fell off, from actual weakness. Having been so long confined in a cellar, where a

ray of light (save that of the jailor's lantern) never penetrated, and my eyes inflamed and swollen by the dust which had entered them, I was rendered quite blind by the sudden transition to the broad daylight, and remained so for several days.

I shall not enter into the particulars of this journey; it will be enough to say, that being strapped to a mule at the onset till I had gained sufficient strength to maintain my seat, I arrived at Caraccas, where I was tried, and instantly acquitted, as Devereux had previously been. It must be understood that his Excellency the President had no share in this, nor even a knowledge of it. He was at the time on the plains of the Apure. Had he been at Rosario, I have not the slightest doubt but things would have been managed very differently.

Not long after I had been thus forced away from the seat of Government, Barino's conduct had become so flagrant and glaring, he was given to understand that, unless he resigned, serious charges would forthwith be made to the Congress and Bolivar. Upon thus finding himself unable longer to withstand the current of popular feeling, he resigned, and retired for a little time to Santa-fé-de-Bogota, with five thousand dollars of the public money, which he had embezzled. Here, I believe, after Bogota had been made the seat of Government, he was brought to trial, in which he

made an elaborate defence, only remarkable for its hypocrisy, and soon after died.

Barino was, I believe, an exceedingly brave man, a good general, and a clever, able senator; but his abuse of power and his tyrannical disposition, which increased with his years, were too great to be passed over in silence. His principles and loyalty, as regarded the cause of liberty, have been doubted; but I never heard that any proof was duly adduced of the truth of the insinuations that were from time to time thrown out against him. His services as a military officer were, I believe, great, and would, but for his failings as a man, have procured him the honourable distinctions to which his conduct in that way entitled him, as he had the best interest of any man in New Grenada; but the frailties of his nature destroyed them all, and he ended his days in disgrace. It was during the administration of Barino that the present constitution was completed by the Committee of Legislation, and it was, I believe, principally indebted to him for most of its best enactments. It was published, as the established constitution of the Republic, on the 30th of August. By a subsequent decree, the Congress was directed to sit at Bogota; and on the 9th of October, Barino being deposed, Santander was appointed to the office of Vice-President.

CHAPTER VIII.

Re-capture of Caraccas by General Morales—Author proceeds to Varinas alone—Narrow escape from the Spaniards—Poisoned arrows of the Indians—Poison how collected—Mode of discharging poisoned arrows—Joins the President at Achaquas—Ordered to take a command of seamen and Sambos—Encounters a Spanish division of La Torre's—Defeat of the same—Fertility of the province of Varinas—Rejoins Bolivar with his force—Reception by General Paez—Account of that chief—His heroism and generosity—Extraordinary anecdote of his bravery—Account of the Llaneros—Their singular familiarity with General Paez—Abilities as horse-stealers—How punished when refractory—Mode of cookery—Medical and chemical skill—Utility of tobacco—Attention of the Generals Bolivar and Paez to the wants of the British.

As soon as I had been released I prepared to go with General Bermudez to the plains of the Apure, where the Independent army was getting ready for a march after the Spaniards. Having but a very weak force with him, that leader was obliged to leave a small garrison only at Caraccas to defend it, and Morales, having been informed of its capture, had moved from Valencia for the purpose of attempting its recovery, taking with him a powerful force. He arrived there a short time after Bermudez had left it, and was of course successful in beating the handful of troops he

found there. After putting them all to death, and leaving a strong garrison to protect the city, he again set out for Valencia.

Bermudez, having altered his plan of operations soon after I had joined him, did not proceed to the plains as he had previously intended, and I was therefore obliged to go on alone, which I found a matter of great difficulty, in consequence of the numerous parties of Spaniards which were stationed along the frontier of the province of Varinas to cut off the supplies of the Republican troops, and also in the mountains, to intercept the couriers. After successfully using every means of concealing myself that I could devise for many days, such as travelling only by night, and creeping on the approach of morning into any little recess in the mountains capable of receiving me, I was at length surprised by a detachment of infantry. Having nothing to trust to but superior speed, I set spurs to my mule, which was shot under me while going at full gallop, and as I was proceeding along one of the zig-zag paths cut on the side of a steep rock, the poor animal, after continuing her speed for a few minutes, rolled down the tremendous precipice. I perceived that this must inevitably be the case as soon as she grew weak from loss of blood, and therefore, immediately after her convulsive start assured me

she was struck, I threw myself off; and as the Spaniards imagined that I had fallen with her, they gave up the pursuit, and I escaped.

Proceeding on foot for some hours, I at length joined an old Indian of the Guahira tribe, who had been into New Grenada to collect the poison which is used for the arrows of that and the neighbouring tribes. This poison, which is most deadly, is thus extracted from a large kind of frog that abounds in the lowlands of New Grenada, though in Venezuela it is so scarce as to be seldom seen. A small stake pointed at one end, is pushed into the mouth of the poor harmless reptile, forced completely through the body, and as far as it can be made to go through one of its legs. A profuse perspiration of a white frothy substance is excited by the intense agony thus caused, which being carefully scraped off and preserved, is sold at a dear rate by the collectors. The heads of the arrows are steeped a short time in the poison, after which a wound inflicted by them will cause the death of a tiger in a few minutes after it is received. The Indians hunt the panther and tiger with arrows so poisoned, which they discharge from ventils (blowpipes) formed of reeds from about ten to fourteen feet in length, and rendered very smooth in the inside. The arrows are never more than a foot and a half

long, and are made of a hard close-grained wood, ingeniously formed at the top like a very taper screw. At the other extremity sufficient cotton is fastened by means of a vegetable glue, to make it just the size of the calibre of the ventil. The arrow being put into the reed, one end of which is applied to the mouth, a good marksman will kill a flying bird at the distance of a hundred yards.

The old Indian, who was intimately acquainted with every passage through the mountains, conducted me to the island of Achaquas, and I there joined his Excellency the President, to whom I represented the manner in which I had been treated by General Barino. He expressed both indignation and regret at the conduct manifested towards me, and informed me that he was about to move his army forward in order to force the Spaniards to an action, and therefore my services could not at that moment be dispensed with; but, at the earliest opportunity, he would grant me leave of absence to once more visit Cucuta, for the completion of the settlement of the claims in favour of the late Major Beamish, and that he would give me every assistance that I could deem requisite for that purpose. With this assurance I left Achaquas the next morning for the city of Angostura, to muster the Sambos and English sailors, and take them in compliance with the directions I had received, by forced marches, into

the province of Varinas, where the whole of Bolivar's army was to meet and unite itself with the bravaes of General Paez.

After having with some difficulty got my men together, I proceeded onwards, but was intercepted by a division of La Torre's army, about ten leagues from Guanare, which was marching towards the spot taken up by the Royalists. From this dilemma the bravery of the Englishmen and blacks delivered me; an obstinate conflict, which lasted about four hours, convinced the enemy that their best plan would have been to let us pass on. They resigned the field to us with all their baggage and the greatest part of their arms, with which we marched into the delightfully fertile province of Varinas, than which it is impossible to conceive a finer country. Every part of it is covered with the most luxuriant vegetation, of which it yields two abundant crops every year, and is fertilized by the bountiful hand of nature, without the least trouble or labour on the part of the cultivators. The overflowing of the branches of the river Oronoco, which completely inundate the verdant plains, are periodical, and the natives, knowing precisely when they will happen, remove the crops in sufficient time. The waters then rush over the land, where they remain for some time, leaving when they retire a thick sediment, which is sufficient to manure

it, and it is thus strengthened for the production of every fresh crop.

Proceeding on towards the town of Varinas, I was informed by some of the natives that Bolivar was encamped a few miles from it, in the direction of the Villa de Aranca, and I there joined him. The brave General Paez received me, though a stranger, with the greatest cordiality, and seeing me weak from a wound which I had received in the engagement with the Spaniards, generously offered to yield up all his own little accommodations till I should be quite recovered.

This heroic and noble-minded man has derived all his ideas and virtues from nature. Nurtured in a country perfectly uncivilised, without the advantages of either birth or fortune, he has, by his own personal merit, his prowess and undaunted courage, raised himself, through the incidents which have from time to time occurred to him during the revolutionary contest, to the command of by far the most effective and useful native force of any in the country. He is a native of the plains of Capac, and descended from the horde of Llaneros, who have ever lived there in the most barbarous and savage manner. When the revolution was first agitated, he was then a young man, and a private in one of the bands of Lancers which are raised on the plains. In this humble situation he soon found means to distinguish himself. His

extraordinary courage and strength enabled him to beat all competitors in the gymnastic exercises, to which the Llaneros daily accustom themselves; and by the adroitness which, from continued practice, he had acquired in the use of their favorite weapon, the lance, he could with ease beat them into submission when any disputes arose. These, together with the numbers he always placed *hors de combat* in their numerous skirmishes, procured him the respect of all his companions, while his mild and unassuming disposition ensured him their respect and friendship. He does not appear to have entertained any wish to aggrandise himself at this period, nor indeed at any subsequent one, as his conduct has ever been marked with a most perfect disinterestedness and indifference, as to his own advantage, in every action of his life. The usual fate however of the chiefs of these bands, and the general esteem in which he was held, soon placed him in command. The leader of the party he belonged to having been killed in action, the whole of the troop instantly and unanimously elected him their chief, and in this station he enacted so many deeds of bravery, and with such universal success, that his band was hourly receiving volunteers, and in a short time became augmented from about 300 to above 2000. With these he commenced operations on a larger scale, and soon

became the most formidable foe the Spaniards ever had in Venezuela, and to him may certainly, with the strictest justice, be attributed in a great degree the independence of that part of Colombia, while his exertions in the cause of New Grenada have been also great and extremely beneficial to it. He could not, at the time I served with him, either read or write, and, until the English arrived on the plains, he was totally unacquainted with the use of knives and forks, so rude and uncivilised had been his previous life. As soon however as he began to mingle with the officers of the British legion, he copied their manners, customs, and dress, and invariably acted as they did, as far as his previous habits would admit, on all occasions. He is about five feet nine inches in height; his frame is very muscular and finely formed, and he possesses wonderful strength and agility. His countenance is handsome and manly; his hair thick, black, and curling; his temperament sanguine, disposition warm, generous and kind, and his mind, though quite uncultivated, enriched with all the virtues which most adorn human nature. Open, frank, and unsuspecting, he is the best of friends, and being perfectly free from the baser passions, the most generous of enemies. He is particularly fond of the English, calling them his brothers, and ever advocating their claims to the gratitude of the country with

the greatest enthusiasm. His intrepidity rendered him equally beloved by them, and, excepting General Marino, he was the most popular chief with them in Colombia. Frequently, when the jealousy of the native officers has led them to make harsh and unmerited observations respecting the services of the British Legion, has he, by a well-timed reproof, checked them; and he was, with but two or three exceptions, the only one who ever candidly acknowledged the benefit which the cause of liberty derived from their services; and he alone ever proposed a public testimonial of it on the part of the Congress.

To enumerate all the anecdotes of this extraordinary man would more than fill a volume, so numerous and romantic are the actions of his life. One of them, which is truly characteristic of his bravery and resolution in cases of emergency, and which illustrates his military character, I will relate. Bolivar was on the plains of the Apure, with his troops in a starving condition, and without the means of procuring food for his army, unless he took a circuitous march of many leagues, to which the strength of the men was incompetent, or found means to arrive at the point he wished to gain, by crossing the river Apure, on whose banks, on the opposite side, were plenty of cattle, grazing within sight of the nearly famished troops. The latter could not be accomplished, as he had no

boats of any description, or timber to construct rafts; but about midway across the river was a fleet of sixty flecheras which belonged to the enemy, and were well armed and manned. Bolivar stood on the shore gazing at these in despair, and continued disconsolately parading in front of them, when Paez, who had been on the look out, rode up and enquired the cause of his disquietude. His Excellency observed, "I would give the world to have possession of the Spanish flotilla, for without it I can never cross the river, and the troops are unable to march." "It shall be yours in an hour," replied Paez. "It is impossible," said Bolivar, "and the men must all perish." "Leave that to me," rejoined Paez, and galloped off. In a few minutes he returned, bringing up his guard of honour, consisting of 300 lancers selected from the main body of the Llaneros, for their proved bravery and strength, and leading them to the bank, thus briefly addressed them: "We must have these flecheras, or die. Let those follow Tio* who please." And at the same moment, spurring his horse, dashed into the river and swam towards the flotilla. The guard followed him with their lances in their mouths, now encouraging their horses to bear up against the

* Uncle. A name by which the Llaneros frequently address Paez, particularly the guards of honour, who are more privileged than the others.

current by swimming by their sides and patting their necks, and then shouting to scare away the alligators, of which there were hundreds in the river, till they reached the boats, when, mounting their horses, they sprang from their backs on board them, headed by their leader, and, to the astonishment of those who beheld them from the shore, captured every one of them. To English officers, it may appear inconceivable that a body of cavalry, with no other arms than their lances, and no other mode of conveyance across a rapid river than their horses, should attack and take a fleet of gun-boats amidst shoals of alligators; but, strange as it may seem, it was actually accomplished, and there are many officers now in England who can testify to the truth of it.

The strength with which nature has endowed General Paéz, is surprising. He will at any time, for mere sport, when his troops are catching wild cattle by means of the lazo*, single out a bull from the herd, and following him on horse-back seize him, while at full speed, by the tail, by a sudden twist of which he will throw the animal over on his side. If upon any excursion he meets with a tiger or wild boar, he instantly

* A slip knot, or noose, which is thrown with great preciseness over the head of the animal intended to be caught. This operation has been so well described by other travellers, that any account of it here is unnecessary.

transfixes him with his lance. From thirty to forty men have been known to fall by his single arm in one engagement, and he is unquestionably the first lancer in the world. He has, since he has risen into notice, generally had from 3,000 to 4,000 men under his command, all of the Llanero tribes, and these form by far the most formidable native force in the Republic; with their aid and by his own indefatigable assiduity he was always able to hold Morillo in check. Paez has ever proved himself a most inveterate enemy to the tyrannical dominion of Spain, and a terrible avenger of his country's injuries. For weeks and months he has followed the steps of Morillo, unceasingly clinging to him like his shadow, and upon every opportunity dashing into his camp at night with frequently not more than from 150 to 200 men, slaughtering all whom he encountered, and on every occasion cutting his way back with very trifling loss. At other times, when the Royalist army was passing through the country, he would seize a favourable moment, when they were fatigued by a harassing day's march, to drive off all their cattle and baggage mules, leaving them without provisions. It was acknowledged by Morillo, that, upon one occasion, when marching from Caracas to Santa-fé-de-Bogota, he was deprived of upwards of 3,000 men, and the whole of his military stores, by the unceasing attacks made upon

him by Paez, and that he was in consequence obliged to abandon the object of his expedition until he was reinforced.

The Llaneros are natives of the plains of Capac and the Apure. They are raised in the manner of militia, but receive no pay excepting what arises from their plunder, which is equally divided amongst them. They are mounted on horses, which, from being long habituated to abstinence and fatigue, are the most serviceable and hardy animals in the world, being trained to perform almost everything their owners can desire. When mounted either in the field or for the chase, both horse and rider appear as if they were actuated by the same impulses; the sagacity of the one enabling it to comprehend the most trifling motion of the other. The Llaneros are badly apparelled and accoutred; their covering and appointments being of the same scanty nature as that worn by the Guerillas, commanded by Colonel Montes, but they are far more brave, and better qualified for field operations; they are exceedingly dextrous and active, and perform any required movements with amazing velocity. Their only weapon is the lance, the shaft of which is from nine to twelve feet in length, light and elastic, but tough and durable. The lance itself has not what is termed a shoulder, like those of European cavalry, but is formed like the blade of a long knife, both

edges of which are as sharp as a razor of good metal, substance, and temper. This is lashed to the shaft by cow-hide thongs, leading from the top of the socket to about eight inches downwards. From their earliest childhood the Llaneros are accustomed to the use of this weapon, small ones being made for such practice by their parents. Previously to their being admitted to the ranks of the bands, it is necessary that they should be duly instructed in the use of this weapon, and that they should be able to catch a wild horse, never before mounted, and after placing one of their large and severe bits in his mouth, go with him at once into action. They are therefore trained to horsemanship as soon as they can stride the steeds of their fathers, and constant practice gives them a perfect fearlessness, so that they will ride on the brink of a precipice and over rocks that would make a less experienced horseman shudder to look at. No observance of respect towards their superior officers is ever observed amongst them; all appear on the same footing; but they pay the most unlimited attention to their orders in the field, where they know it is certain death to treat them with levity. In this point, I believe, lies all their discipline; as out of the field they are dirty, irregular, and dishonest, and treat their officers (who are, it must be confessed, but very little better than themselves in any

respect) with the same freedom as they do each other. It was a thing of usual occurrence to see one of these ruffians approach General Paez, and address him by the appellation of Tio, or Compadre,* and ask for anything he might want, without the smallest anticipation of a refusal, from his known good nature; and if the chief happened to be absent when they wished to see him, they would go all over the camp or town in search of him, uttering the above names in a loud sonorous tone, till he had heard and satisfied them. At other times, while on service, if he were at his meals, which were generally enjoyed in the open field, should any of them take a fancy to the piece of tassao, or other provisions, he was about to eat, they would with peculiar adroitness go behind him and snatch it away, at which he would only laugh, and cry out *animo † justo*.

The Llaneros only yield in bravery to the Sambos, and this arises, I presume, from their not entertaining the doctrine of fatalism; to all the remaining races they are superior in courage. They are decidedly the best of the native forces, but are nevertheless obstinate, and at times will yield to a very inferior force, not wholly through fear, but for the sake of betraying any

* Protector.

† Well done—right.

of their officers, who may have offended them, into the hands of the enemy. Their evil propensities are to be ascribed to their mode of living in their youthful days. Exclusively bred on the plains, not having any intercourse with the more civilised inhabitants of the Republic, and living as they do beyond the pale of any law, they carry on a system of rapine and murder from their childhood, over which the government appears not to have the slightest controul, but who will, I apprehend, at a time perhaps not far distant, have to deplore and dread the increased exercise of their lawless power.

The Llaneros express themselves on most occasions when they are deeply interested, and particularly in their amours, in couplets, which are perfectly extempore; their rhymes are generally very happy, and their meaning very applicable to the occasion. They also play on a guitar of rather rude construction, upon which they accompany themselves while serenading their mistresses, and their songs are always extempore. They have a habit, which they derive from education, of appropriating the property of others to their own use, which becomes so natural to them that no dread of the most condign punishment can divest them of it. The horses belonging to the officers of the British Legion, which were, in most cases, of the Santa Fé breed,

and are esteemed the finest in the country, were always stolen, whenever the owners or their servants left them but for a few moments unguarded. One instance of this kind of theft is rather ludicrous, and, as it shows their dexterity, it may be worth while to relate it.

Major Manby had two very valuable chargers, and having reason to apprehend that they would be stolen, as several of his brother officers had met with similar losses, he was determined to secure them if possible. With this intention he tied their halters, which were made of very strongly twisted hide, to each of his own legs, leaving the animals sufficient room to graze, and laid himself down under a tree to sleep. When he awoke he found, to his dismay, that the horses were both gone, and his legs so firmly fastened to the tree with the halters, that he was obliged to use his sword to release himself from his bed. There is no possibility of ever regaining animals thus purloined, as they are immediately driven two or three hundred miles across the plains to a place of security.

The Llaneros are a tall, muscular set of men, capable of great fatigue, and are commonly abstemious, but they are deceptive, cunning, and prone to revenge. The latter passion, they will employ every means in their power to gratify, and that in the most cruel and sanguinary manner they can devise. They shed the blood of their dearest

ties on the most trivial occasions with frigid indifference, and had they not been restrained in a great degree by the active and powerful energies of their leader, they would long before this have had the whole of the wealth of the country in their own hands. General Paez possesses all the requisites for commanding this horde, and of keeping them in subjection, and is perhaps the only man in Colombia who could so effectually restrain them in their rapacity and passion for murder. He has no laws by which he governs them, but trusts solely to his own prowess to quell all disturbances, and to chastise all their delinquencies. Whenever any of them commit acts which are deserving of punishment, or express dissatisfaction at any regulation which may have been adopted, he tells them they must meet him in single combat; and this they are obliged by their own usages to do, or their comrades would drive them from the ranks. They thus receive the reward of their offences from the hands of their chief, whose valour always prevails; and this circumstance gains him more weight and respect with such troops than any other method he could pursue.

General Paez is subject to attacks of epilepsy upon any violent excitement of the nervous system, and they generally seize him either during an action, or immediately after it. The manner

of warfare followed by the Llaneros, consists in charging repeatedly with the utmost fury through the thickest of the enemy's lines, until they succeed in throwing the whole into confusion, on which they slaughter all around them. On these onsets the exertions of Paez are so violent, that he is seized with sudden vertigo and falls from his horse, which is so trained that it will stop the instant it feels his rider leaving its back, who remains on the ground until some of his men raise him. He is then taken to the rear, and the only means used to recover him are dashing cold water over him, or, if there be sufficient at hand, by immersing him suddenly into it, accompanied by a violent shaking. These attacks have subjected him to the most imminent danger, the enemy having been known to pass over him several times before his men could approach to rescue him. He is generally very weak for several days after these fits, although he invariably re-enters the field, if sufficiently recovered to be able to retain his seat on horseback, before the action is finished. In some instances he has done this, notwithstanding he has been nearly speechless from the severity of the fit. In short, he is altogether a most wonderful man; and were the numerous extraordinary incidents of his life to be formed into a narrative, it would have more the semblance of romance than authentic biogra-

phy. He is, above all things, a sincere patriot, and certainly a bright ornament to his country, which there can be but little doubt he has been the principal means of continuing thus long a Republic. He has even showed the most determined resolution in resisting the attempts made by Bolivar's party to raise him to the sovereignty of the country, and that he will continue to do so there is but little doubt. A remarkable occurrence, which took place at Caraccas, will forcibly illustrate his warmth and determination as regards this grand consideration.

At a public dinner, which took place after taking that town, a member of Bolivar's party proposed as a toast, that the President might be constituted the monarch of Colombia. His Excellency openly thanked him for this proof of attachment, on which Paez arose, and taking his cuchillo* from his belt, opened it, and said emphatically, "Should it ever be proved to me that General Bolivar aims at the sovereignty of the Republic, I will plunge this knife in his breast with no more hesitation than I now strike it into the table," at the same time dashing it into the

* A long knife of a peculiar make, shutting up in a handle, with a strong spring, carried by most of the natives of Colombia for their use on their marches, and used as a weapon of defence on emergencies. The blade is about ten or twelve inches in length.

board with all the strength he seemed to possess. He then seized the officer, who had proposed the toast, by the nape of the neck, and threw him on the floor of the apartment with the greatest violence. Bolivar, with his usual tact, applauded him for his sentiments, and, seeing that Paez but little relished the affair, loudly condemned the officer for his conduct.

The mode of living adopted by the army in its encampment on the plains, was precisely the same as that followed by the Llaneros, who, although they are not epicures, are not indifferent to the good things of life, according to their own taste. Their methods of preparing food being novel to Europeans, I will describe some of them, which will give a good idea of the whole. When fresh-killed beef is to be eaten, they always select a joint which may be termed the "saddle," it being formed of the two rumps, which they never divide. The hide is not stripped off, but the hair is burned away by the application of a flaming brand, which renders the skin hard and nearly impenetrable. Several joints of this description being selected, a large hole is dug in the ground about five feet deep, and of a length and breadth in proportion to the quantity of meat to be dressed. The inside is completely lined with flat stones, and a brisk fire is maintained in it till deemed sufficiently hot. It is then cleansed

out perfectly, and the meat is placed with the hide downwards on sticks, fastened from side to side horizontally, and large stones being placed over the hole to exclude the air, it is thus baked. The hide is drawn by the heat from the centre of the meat, but the sides are properly bound up, thus forming a natural receptacle for the juices, in which they are admirably preserved, and the use of dishes is rendered unnecessary. Joints thus prepared are termed "Carne con cuèro." * Another dish, which is esteemed a high treat amongst them, is a sheep or goat, with the skin left on in the manner before described, and the inside filled with turkeys, fowls, ducks, wild geese, pieces of pork, plantains, yams, calivansas, cassava-bread powdered, boiled maize, oranges, lemons, and any other ingredients which may chance to fall in their way, the whole being cut up into small pieces, and duly seasoned. The animal being thus stuffed, is skewered together, and treated in the same way as the beef. When the viands are considered sufficiently dressed, a loud blast proclaims it to the officers, who immediately arrange themselves in a ring to enjoy the repast. One of the soldiers, appointed a waiter on the occasion, sticks his lance into the meat, and thus conveys it to the chief, who helps himself; after

* Meat with the hide on.

which it goes round, on the point of the lance, to all the rest.

Their favourite drinks are the *aquardiente* and anise, which they will take in large quantities, but of weaker diluents they have a great abhorrence. As their mode of life naturally subjects them to many accidents, and they are without the benefit of any regular medical aid, they are each instructed at an early age in the curative art, according to the ideas of it generally received amongst themselves. The herb called "*cocaisa*" is one of their most celebrated "*curandoes*," and is, justly I believe, held in esteem both by the *Llaneros* and the Indians. There are several species of it; but that bearing a leaf of a fine blue tint is considered to possess the most medicinal qualities. The leaves are pounded in a mortar, and are together, with the expressed juice, boiled, till the whole becomes of the consistency of a thick paste. It is then preserved for use, and if applied to any recent wound or cut, effectually heals it in a few days. Ulcers will also frequently yield to its efficacy. Another of their remedies is collected from certain small snakes, found in the grass in the plains, whose sting it is said occasions the deprivation of all use of the bitten limb, and in some cases a temporary loss of speech. The *Llaneros* get as many of these reptiles together as they can, and cutting them open,

take out the fat from the inside, and clarify it; afterwards it is made into a sort of ointment, which they apply with great advantage to any wound occasioned by the venom of the snakes. From a description of milk which constantly oozes from a trunk of the caucho tree, these people contrive to make a very good drink, colouring it with a mineral. They also form a preparation of the same milk with a vegetable gum, in which they dip their few articles of apparel, and thereby render them water-proof.

The short time we were encamped here was by far the most agreeable period I enjoyed during my stay in the Republican service, while on duty. The delightful situation we were in, as regarded country, climate, and an abundance of provisions, served to render it very pleasant. Our time was however too much taken up in the pursuit of amusements, and the discipline and organization of the troops were but little attended to. The enjoyment of the present moment seemed the principal consideration at that time, as indeed it always was, with the majority of the native officers, who appeared to think little, and care still less, for the future.

Our time was chiefly occupied in shooting parties, making frequent incursions upon the inhabitants of the woods, which lay a few miles from us. The parrots, which are found principally among

the palm-trees, suffered much by our visits; great numbers of them being killed. They are delicious eating, and were of course highly esteemed in a situation where it was so extremely difficult to obtain any agreeable addition to the bill of fare presented to us by the Llaneros.

The sports of the day concluded, the Llaneros used to serenade us in our ranchas, singing lively airs, and giving comic recitations, of their own composition. Here, too, tobacco was plentiful and excellent, the province of Varinas being famed for its produce of that herb. As much as we required could now be procured for nothing, while, on our previous march through Venezuela, twenty and thirty dollars per pound were in vain offered for it. The benefit derived from the use of this herb on such a service may be questioned, and perhaps the idea ridiculed. It will always, however, be adequately appreciated by those who have experienced it.

The natural playfulness of Paez's disposition, and the unceasing desire he evinced to render the British as happy as possible, greatly added to our comforts and mirth. It would be difficult to conceive a more amiable character than that of this gallant man, in the more peaceable moments of his life. He was deservedly endeared to all the British who ever served with him; and, I believe, every one of them would have cheerfully died in

his defence had it been required of him. Nor were the efforts of the President to increase our comforts less conspicuous. It must be confessed that Bolivar was on all such occasions ever anxious to supply our wants, and frequently shared his own private stock of provisions with the British. The President is particularly liberal and considerate in this respect; and I believe that he always felt the privations of the troops in their distressed situations as much as they did themselves.

CHAPTER IX.

Junction of the forces of Morales and La Torre—Deficiency in the Independent military arrangements—Battle of Carabobo—Bravery of the Sambos—Intrepidity of the British Legion—Hesitation of the Llaneros—Flight of the Creole troops—Manner in which General Paez recalled his followers—Dreadful charge of the Llaneros—Bravery and military skill of a young Spanish Colonel—Military generosity of General Paez—Complete defeat of the Spaniards—Carabobo termed the Waterloo of Colombia—Victory improperly attributed to Bolivar—His inactivity during the contest, and probable cause of it—Deportment after the battle—Promotion of Colonel Mackintosh and the Author—British and Irish Legions united—Death of Colonel Ferrier—Loss in the battle—One of the causes of the defeat of the Spaniards—Humour of a young Irish officer—Caraccas surrenders—Description of Caraccas—Port of La Guayra—Festivities of Caraccas—Description of the theatre—Hospitality of the natives—Addicted to unmeaning compliment—Jealousy of foreign superiority—Women of Colombia—Deportment at dinner parties—Singular custom—Their conversationes—Fondness for bull fights.

THIS way of life lasted a fortnight, at the expiration of which the President received intelligence that Generals Morales and La Torre had concentrated their forces on the plains of Carabobo; and a council of war was summoned, to decide upon the best step which could be pursued. General Paez, who was eager for the opening of the

campaign, urged the propriety of proceeding immediately after them, and being seconded by Colonel Mackintosh, who had the command of the British Legion, and the other principal officers, it was resolved that our camp should be broken up the next day. We therefore marched, but not, even in this instance, without some of the disadvantages which usually attended the Independent army, in consequence of the negligence of those who had the management of affairs.

In a country like Colombia it can never be difficult to procure as many horses and mules as may be required for any purpose, as by sending out guassos, * they can be procured without any expense. Yet, notwithstanding this facility, there were not fifty horses and mules in the whole, for the purpose of conveying the stores of the army, although the Llaneros had been kept in a state of perfect idleness from the earliest period of their arrival in the province. Just as we were about to move, this deficiency was thought of, and a body of lancers was sent out in quest of some. They returned with a few, but not enough for the wants of the army, as the time allowed them was too short to admit of a large number being taken.

We proceeded over the plains of the Apure,

* Persons so termed, who are employed to catch wild cattle, &c. with the lazo.

towards the station occupied by the Royalists; and, late in the night of the 23d June 1821, arrived at the wood which separates the plains we had traversed from those of Carabobo. The Spaniards were here assembled to the amount of above 7000; and having been encamped nearly three weeks, and abundantly provided with provisions, they were in fine order and in high spirits. Being superior in number as well as condition to the patriot force, which, including the Llaneros, were but few more than 5,000, it was fully expected that they would make a hard struggle with us for the victory. We had continued our journey by forced marches, the latter part of which we had been on a very short allowance of provisions, about six plantains per diem, each man, being all that could be spared. The troops were therefore much reduced, and, compared to the Spanish army, apparently very unequal to the contest. The action was ordered to commence the next morning; and, the necessary preparations being made, the men rested on their arms for about four hours. The British battalion did not at that time amount to more than six hundred, the rest of the Legion which remained alive being distributed amongst the native corps, to introduce British discipline amongst them.

There was only one known path leading to the plains of Carabobo, which was through a narrow

defile, scarcely large enough to admit a file of men. Here the Spaniards, on receiving an intimation of our approach, had placed the whole of their artillery, and drawn up their entire army to prevent its being forced. We had been ordered to attack this point and had moved towards it, when one of the Indian guides, employed to conduct us over the plains, informed Bolivar that he knew of another pass, a little to the left of the defile, much smaller than the one just described, which would, if cleared away, afford us an entrance, though it would be effected with difficulty. To this passage I was directed to take the blacks, in order to remove the impediments with their machettis; the British Legion and the Llaneros, with the other native troops, being commanded to follow forthwith. I therefore marched them in double quick time to the pass, and had soon the satisfaction of seeing them clear a good passage. The Spaniards perceiving this, also proceeded with the same quickness; but, as they had not time to move their artillery, they left it with one battalion to guard it at the defile. The Sambos, having worked their way to the end of the wood, now loudly called for permission to descend the bank which bounded the plain of Carabobo, and to commence the action. They had not completed the passage to my wishes, but knowing how much depended on the energies of

the troops when the odds were so much against them, I was unwilling to damp their ardour, and therefore consented.

We accordingly entered the plain, the Sambos rushing on like tigers, and the British Legion, under Colonel Mackintosh, following them with all the cool steadiness for which they had been so long famed. Immediately the whole of the Spanish musketry was discharged at the Patriots, and the brave fellows were brought down in great numbers by the first volley. The whole of the native troops, seeing the appalling situation of their companions, could not be brought to enter the field, not even the Llaneros, the bravoes of the Apure, who had till then been considered invincible, and not to be daunted. All of them fled, as did some of the inexperienced troops sent out by General Devereux, who had been united, by the direction of Bolivar, into a battalion under Colonel Ferrier, a very brave officer. It was not, until General Paez had lanced upwards of twenty of his men with his own hand, that he could succeed in rallying them and bringing them on the field. He then, at their head, dashed over the plain, and enacted, I believe, more wonders than any officer had ever done in Colombia before. Meanwhile, Colonel Mackintosh led on his handful of troops with the greatest coolness, and with a degree of

confidence and courage but seldom manifested under such circumstances, being deserted by all the troops, save the blacks and the few English sailors attached to them, and in the front of 7,000 men, who could have annihilated him with ease. He moved his men steadily on till they had completely formed, amidst the destructive fire which had been kept up in sections by the enemy after their first general discharge, and then, after a volley, charged with the bayonet into the thickest of the Spanish lines.

In conjunction with the Sambos, the legion had forced the centre before the Llaneros came into the field, and had destroyed hundreds of their opponents; but when Paez entered and commenced his dreadful charge upon the devoted Royalists, the destruction of them was horrible, and any attempt to describe it would be in vain. The charges were repeated several times, each adding to the general slaughter; and the other native troops, perceiving that there was little doubt of the success of their party, now entered the plain, and busily employed themselves in cutting off portions of the Spaniards who had separated themselves from the main body, and putting them to death. In one hour from the time Mackintosh entered the plain, five entire battalions of the enemy had lain down their arms, and the others, who were the survivors, had taken flight. Only

2,000 in the whole escaped, the rest were all put to death. One young officer at the head of his regiment, who had behaved with great gallantry during the battle, remained on the field fighting to the last, after all the others had dispersed, when, perceiving that there was no chance of contending longer with success, he moved his men off in a very cool, regular manner; and so struck was Paez with the bravery he displayed, that he would not allow him to be attacked on his masterly retreat.

The success of this battle was, as may possibly have been seen, of the utmost importance to the cause of liberty. Had the Republicans been defeated, they must have bidden farewell to all hope of independence for some time at least; but, as it was, the Royalists were almost comparatively annihilated; and so great were the advantages derived from this battle, and so decisive did it prove, that the natives have ever styled it the "Waterloo" of Colombia. The success of it, however, in all the published accounts was, with the greatest injustice, attributed to Bolivar, notwithstanding it was obvious to all who were concerned in it that he had not the slightest participation in producing it. His Excellency remained during the whole action so completely paralysed (as I presume) in consequence of the terror displayed by the native forces at

the onset, and the fear which he must have entertained, in common with many others, that the troops which were on the field could not withstand the heavy fire of the enemy, that he was unable to give a single order, neither did he utter one direction during the whole battle.

The President did not recover himself till victory was proclaimed on the part of the Republicans, and the enemy had left the field, when he ran to General Paez and embraced him warmly, and promoted him to the rank of Captain General. He then embraced Colonel Mackintosh, and conferred upon him the rank of General of Division*, and proceeding through the ranks of the Legion, embraced every man, and bestowed upon the whole the order of Libertador. The two remnants of the British and Irish Legions were united by his Excellency's command, and were named on the field "the Regiment of Carabobo." Colonel Ferrier, who had commanded the fragment of Devereux's troops, fell with the colours of his party in his hand, which he had just retaken from a Spaniard. He was subsequently buried with military honours.

His Excellency also did me the honour of creating me a general officer in the army, and of investing me with all the privileges of a citizen

* This rank was subsequently taken from the Colonel, in consequence of some pique entertained against him.



of Colombia, and I moreover received a grant of land. Bolivar, in this instance, with a candour that does him honour, gave the entire credit of the action to the British, the Llaneros, and the Sambos, and confessed that he was not entitled to the least merit on the occasion. To Colonel Mackintosh can alone be given the military merit of it, as without his cool intrepidity and masterly tactics, the whole force must have been destroyed. Of the patriot troops there were killed—British 150, Llaneros, near 300, and Sambos and the seamen united to them, 450. The latter body would not have suffered so severely, but that they received the whole of the first tremendous fire discharged by the enemy. A large proportion of each was wounded. This battle would not have been gained so easily but for the misunderstanding which had for some time before existed between the two Spanish chiefs, Morales and La Torre. After the action I took up my quarters in the house of a peasant, where they had both been lodged previous to the coming up of the Independent army, the owner of which informed me that many of their hours of privacy were passed in continued bickerings, each being jealous of the other. This feeling being at length made known to the troops, it communicated to them a spirit of discontent, and an inclination towards party squabbles, according to their different views

of the case; and this variance, no doubt, greatly damped their ardour in the conflict.

The Royalist Generals now fled to Portobello, taking with them all the troops which had escaped from the last battle, excepting the regiment allowed by Paez to get away, and that had gone to Caraccas. After staying a few days on the plain to recruit the troops, who were much exhausted, it became a matter of discussion between the Generals Bolivar and Paez, whether the army should proceed at once to Portobello, in order to complete the destruction of the Spanish force, as recommended by the latter, or march towards the city of Caraccas, to reduce it, as proposed by his Excellency. The President prevailed, and we therefore went thither as soon as the strength of the troops would permit.

After another harassing march, in which, as in all others in South America, the dearth of provisions and the immense labour and fatigue contributed materially to thin our ranks, we arrived within eight leagues of the city, and halted for the night in a small wood, intending to march forward in the morning, and commence the attack the next evening.

It was usual with the President, whenever he could by any means obtain a supply of provisions, to invite his officers around him, and share it equally between them; and I have frequently

known him to reserve for himself but a very slender portion. The night on which we halted at the wood, his Excellency invited the whole of the officers to a party, and seated in a ring we did justice to some good wine and porter, which Bolivar had received from Angostura. In the midst of our conviviality, it was observed by a young Irish officer, who possessed a great flow of humour, and was much noticed by Bolivar, that he did not think the President would take Caraccas. No particular notice of this remark was taken at the time, as he was continually joking on some topic; and we retired early to bivouac for the night. Not so with the officer just alluded to, who took three of the baggage mules belonging to the army, and having borrowed an equal number of dresses from General officers, without mentioning his motive, arrayed himself in one, and decked out his own servant, and also mine (whom he had induced to go with him) in the others. With these men, who were both Irish, and eager for any adventure that promised them a frolic, he rode off to Caraccas as fast as the mules could carry him. Arrived there, he went up with a flag of truce, and desired to see the Spanish governor, pretending that he had been sent by Bolivar to offer him terms of capitulation, and asserting that the Patriot army was not more than three miles from the city.

The governor, being completely taken by surprise, as he had never apprehended the approach of an enemy, and knowing that his own forces were unequal to combat with Bolivar's army, was only eager to ensure the lives of himself and men upon any terms. He, therefore, without questioning the authority of the person he was treating with, or requesting to see his credentials, at once agreed to surrender the town to Bolivar, upon the agent signing a stipulation, on behalf of the President, that himself and troops should be treated with all due respect, and furnished with all things necessary for their support till they could leave the city, when they should have safe conduct to any part of Venezuela they pleased to go to, which should at that time be in possession of the Royalists. These terms being agreed to and signed, the Lieutenant returned to the army to report the success of his nocturnal excursion.

He came within sight of us just as we had commenced the march. Several enquiries had been previously made for him, and conjecture was busy as to the cause of his absence. When, however, we saw him approach in his borrowed plumes, accompanied by the two gaily dressed servants, it was imagined that he had been playing some trick upon the inhabitants of a neighbouring little town. Riding up to Bolivar, with assumed gravity he presented to his Excellency the terms,

of capitulation, and informed him the city of Caraccas was his own, and that he might march into it as soon as he pleased. Bolivar refused to listen to him, merely laughing at what he supposed to be a made-up tale; but at length, seeing the signature of the governor, and his seal affixed to the document, he became satisfied as to the correctness of it. We marched into the city the same evening, and the inhabitants received us with open arms. Our Lieutenant acquired by this adventure the name of "The town-taker." He was a brave young man, though thoughtless. He rose rapidly in the army; but, not long after I left the country, was killed, at the re-capture of Maracaibo by the Royalists.

The city of Caraccas is erected in a most delightful spot, termed the vale of Arragon, at an elevation of more than 3000 feet above the level of the sea. It is irregularly built; but when viewed from the extremity of the vale, or from the neighbouring mountains, it is excessively grand in its appearance, and is perhaps the more so from its irregularity. It contains several squares of good size, ornamented with fountains, that are continually laving the city, and which give it a degree of coolness not experienced on the plain, although but a few yards from it. The buildings are all spacious and of handsome construction. Every house is a mansion, and has beautiful gardens attached

to it, very tastefully laid out. In all the buildings a fine white stucco is used, which adds much to their splendid appearance. It also contains a large theatre, which was originally erected by the Royalists, to draw the people into the pursuit of pleasure, in order to make them the more easily and insensibly submit to the yoke they were preparing for them. It is upon the whole a most enchanting place of residence; and situated as it is in one of the finest vallies in the world, it would be as healthy as beautiful did not a bad arrangement, respecting the sewers of the city, render it otherwise. In each street is one or two shallow drains, for the conveyance of the domestic filth and the rain-water beyond the city. These are covered with flat pieces of stone, in such a manner as to leave interstices between them, that the drain may receive the water which runs in torrents from the houses during the wet seasons. The unwholesomeness of the exhalations, which continually arise from these openings, is extremely offensive, and in conjunction with a large pond at the extremity of the city, where the contents of all are emptied, and where the offensive matter is allowed to decompose, serves to engender fevers of a malignant nature, or at least these disorders have been, with good apparent reason, attributed to such causes. Happily four or five clear streams run constantly through the city,

which tend, in some degree, to counteract these injurious exhalations.

La Guayra, which is the port of Caraccas, is five leagues distant from the city, the road lying across a branch of the Cordillera of the Andes, between 6,000 and 7,000 feet above the sea. On this road, which is excessively difficult of access, is one small building used as an inn, and termed "La Venta,"* from its situation. This forms a very good resting place for travellers, and they are sometimes provided with very bad refreshments at an exorbitant rate, and at others nothing of the kind is to be obtained.† Above 100,000 Indians are reported to have been sacrificed in the construction of this road. They were chained together by the Spaniards, and thus compelled to work, exposed to every description of want, and oppressed by every cruelty that could be inflicted; remains of the pavement laid down by them are still to be seen. The sides of the mountains are thickly covered with wood, whose beautiful foliage sheds a bright lustre over their rugged and inaccessible surfaces. Numerous terraces are seen rising with perfect regularity above each other, every one being a separate plantation of coffee, plantains, cocoa, &c. The view of the

* A road-side inn.

† This was the case during the war. Peace may have altered its circumstances.

adjacent country, from the winding path leading over the mountain, is varied and delightful. Here are frequently seen large droves of mules winding their weary way along the rugged road, every step threatening to cast them down into the abyss below, as often proves their fate.

La Guayra itself is desolated and dreary, in consequence of the earthquake of 1812. About 300 yards in its rear rises a chain of mountains, to the perpendicular height of above 9000 feet, which, causing a powerful reflection of the solar rays on the port, together with its latitude 10° , renders the heat nearly insupportable, and the place altogether unhealthy. As a port it is particularly inconvenient, for several reasons; among which its distance from the city itself, and the very unsafe rendezvous it affords to ships, are far from the most inconsiderable. There is, in fact, no harbour, unless a very insecure roadstead may be so termed. The Coquita cables are eagerly sought after by vessels trading to this port, as also along the coast, being much safer and more durable than those of hemp.

In order to effectually secure the affections of the people of Caraccas, which he knew were ever on the wane, his Excellency ordered a succession of entertainments to be prepared for their diversion, and for several days there was nothing to be seen or heard of but dancing, feasting, and bull-

fighting. The theatre was made use of, and all the officers, who possessed any dramatic taste, were requested to form themselves into a company, and thus several pieces were respectably performed. The theatre is entirely without a roof, as in fine weather the heat occasioned by such a large assemblage could not be sustained in a covered building. In the wet seasons it is but rarely occupied, and then it has a tarpauling drawn over it. It is large, and has a pit, three tiers of boxes, and a gallery of very great dimensions. The boxes are covered to exclude the rays of the sun, which might destroy the fine complexion of the ladies, who here, as well as the gentlemen, enjoy the privilege of smoking cigars, and holding conversations, after which they are often seen indulging in a nap. Freedom is the order of the day in Colombia, and neither sex lay any restraint upon their inclinations.

The higher orders of society throughout the Republic, have several good qualities, combined with a great deal of inconsistency, and many errors. They are excessively kind and charitable to persons in distress, and in the exercise of their benevolence they are not influenced by any national feelings. Every stranger who visits their shores is welcome to their tables, and hospitality in its most unlimited sense, is in no country more liberally, and at the same time more delicately

observed than in Colombia. In their intimacies they are reserved and open, volatile and gloomy, polite and uncouth, according to the caprice of the moment. In their professions of friendship, they are insincere; and, indeed, so regardless are they of truth, that they never consider it at all necessary to recollect any promise they may have made. When a stranger is first introduced to a family, it is common for the master of the house to tell him, that himself and all that belong to him are at his disposal, yet the next day the same person will pass him in the streets unheeded. If a traveller sees a native mounted on a fine horse which he may admire, he is instantly told that the horse is his own, and shall be sent to him in an hour, but he never receives the present, nor is the promise ever thought of afterwards. I have, in the course of a ride of a couple of hours with a native, known the same horse to be given to twenty different persons, many of whom have merely looked at the animal; and the person thus liberally disposing of it has, at the commencement of our ride, given it to myself with just the same parade and professions of regard.

The Colombians are, perhaps, of all people, the most influenced by circumstances. When in poverty or difficulty of any sort, they will descend to the greatest meanness and servility, but on the contrary, when exalted by wealth

or power, their assumed pride is inconceivable. When the destiny of their country hung by a hair, when their own armies were proved incapable of contending with the veteran troops of Spain, their attention and promises to those foreigners who engaged in their cause, exceeded the bounds of probability; but when their freedom was achieved, as it literally was by the latter, scarcely a Creole was to be found who would award the meed of praise to those who had bled in defence of the rights of his country. Their jealousy of foreign talent, whether exerted in the field or elsewhere, knows no limits. This ungenerous feeling belongs exclusively to the higher classes. The peasantry are all a humble civil race, and are proud to be commanded by foreigners, from a consciousness (as they themselves express it) of their superiority in the field over their own countrymen. From this tractable trait of character, I must however totally exempt the Llaneros of the plains, as they are utterly uncontrollable except by their own chiefs, and even as regards them, I have frequently observed, while serving with them, that they considered it a point of favour to obey an order.

The better orders of females in Colombia are extremely affable, and seem to inherit a degree of natural politeness, which is certainly not produced by education. Those of New Grenada are less informed, than the inhabitants of Venezuela, and

from not enjoying, till very recently, the same intercourse with foreigners, were much more reserved, at the time I was in the country. Most of them, in both divisions of the Republic, are very comely, at an early age, but their beauty is of short duration; their teeth are spoiled very quickly by the constant use of dulce; and after they arrive at twenty-eight or thirty, they all speedily assume an appearance of very advanced age. Their complexions vary according to the particular place they inhabit, but all possess very fine and long hair, bright sparkling eyes, and beautiful teeth, at an early age; but I cannot say that any of them pay that due regard to delicacy and cleanliness, so usually observed in other countries. Education is scarcely ever attended to by the parents, and it is therefore a rare occurrence to find a female, even of the most superior families, who can read or write. Their principal accomplishment is dancing, in which they all excel. I have never seen a Creole of any degree, that did not go through the intricate evolutions of their native dances with much grace and elegance. Their other amusements are wholly of a sensual nature; and, indeed, the intellectual bears but a very small proportion in the scale of their pursuits throughout life. There is, in consequence of the narrowness of their education, an universal dearth of conversation throughout the female society in

Colombia, save upon the little topics of the day, such as their dresses, balls and feasts, and lastly their domestic scandal, in which they indulge to an extent that is disgusting. Their converzationes are generally held in the fore part of the day, and they usually sit on large sofas, in clusters, the legs crossed *à la Turque*, and their drapery arranged in such a manner as to expose their ancles, which, with their feet, are commonly very prettily formed. The former are generally ornamented with bracelets, and they wear garters, which have tassels of gold or silver descending from them, which they take care shall be seen. Here they smoke cigars, receive the homage of their gallants, and listen to and retail the tales in circulation to the prejudice of their neighbours. Wo unto her who has the temerity to endeavour to eclipse the other members of her circle in any entertainment or equipage. There is not a fault in the scale of female frailty that will not be unhesitatingly heaped upon her devoted head, and she is at length driven from the field entirely. The feasts of the Colombians are profuse, and of frequent occurrence, in which they spare no expense. Their tables are loaded till ready to sink beneath their burdens, but it is without the slightest observance of taste or comfort. A singular custom prevails among the ladies of Colombia, particularly the higher class. At the close of any feast,

having fully satisfied their appetites, which are by no means very moderate, they commence a regular attack upon such delicacies as remain on the table untouched, which generally consist of dulce and other sweetmeats. With these they fill their handkerchiefs as fast as possible, and hand them over to their own domestics, who are in waiting at such entertainments, and who walk home with their respective booties. These attacks often end in quarrels, and sometimes in certain damages to the persons of the fair scramblers, who are not remarkable for their gentleness on such occasions. I saw, upon one affair of this kind, at the house of General Barino, at Rosario de Cucuta, several of the ladies, the table, and its contents, with the seats, &c. thrown on the floor of the apartment, where they remained attacking each other with the utmost vehemence, amidst the general wreck; and one damsel, who had gallantly withstood the assaults of her numerous antagonists, and had borne off the greatest proportion of the plunder, was loudly applauded for her prowess, and finally chaired round the room in triumph by her male admirers.

Next to eating and dancing, bull-baiting and cock-fighting seem to hold the most distinguished place in their amusements. These commonly occur on all public festivals, and are performed in the plazas of the towns. The ladies

occupy the surrounding windows or benches, arranged in the open air, and regularly applaud any particular feat with great earnestness. Not only, indeed, do they look on these disgusting and sanguinary scenes with perfect indifference as to the sufferings of the tortured animals, but less with an expression of pity than of delight.

CHAPTER X.

Author's attempt to adjust the claim of the representatives of Major Beamish—Second journey to Rosario de Cucuta—Interview with General Santander—Treatment of the claim by Congress—Author determines to quit the Colombian service—Sketch of the career of the Vice-President Santander—Discontent of the British officers—Author induced to take another command—Inactivity and apathy of the Independents before Portobello—Escape of General Morales—Desolation produced by the war—Population of the Republic—Mixed nature of the different races—State of the Indians—Capture of a Spanish force at Ocumare—Final rejection of the claims of the representatives of Major Beamish—The health of the Author materially affected—Determines to quit the Colombian service—Visits General Arismendez—Embarks for Curaçoe, and obliged to return—Embarks in a brig bound for England—A lady placed under his protection—Wrecked off one of the Bahama islands—Obstinacy of master and crew—Narrow escape—Saves part of the cargo—Sails for England.

PERCEIVING that any further military movements were not likely to take place for some time, I took the liberty of reminding his Excellency of the promise he had made me, that I should have an opportunity of arranging the affairs of Major Beamish, and I also requested some part of my arrears of pay, as did many other officers at the same time. To my surprise, the latter was refused, in all cases, on the old plea of inability, and

all that could be obtained was a renewal of promises; though at the same moment it was manifest to every one, that more money than was sufficient to have satisfied the officers and troops was squandered away in a profusion of banquets and ridiculous pageantry, which could only have been gratifying to the vanity of the promoter of it.* The fulfilment of the promise which I had received, and had regarded as inviolable, of having the necessary letters of recommendation, and certificates respecting Major Beamish's battalion, was now, in common with every other, avoided. When I pressed for them, his Excellency repeated his former observation, that they were unnecessary, as the Congress would receive the claims with all the liberality I could desire.

I therefore started once more for Rosario de Cucuta; but, from the cause just mentioned, in very straitened circumstances, and under great difficulties. There was evidently a desire, on the part of Bolivar, to prevent this journey, as he not

* Persons were employed to celebrate his prowess and achievements in numerous sonnets, which were hourly sang by others through Caraccas. Allegorical entertainments were got up, in which Bolivar was represented as the God of War, and addresses of congratulation, on his entry into the city, were prepared by his own friends, for the signatures of such of the inhabitants as could write, in which he was styled "Simon the Heaven-born."

not only withheld the letters he had promised, but the usual warrants for the impressment of mules upon the journey. I was however determined to go at all hazards, and with a very slender purse started, and after a tedious journey of nearly six weeks, reached the seat of government, I waited upon General Santander, who received me with great politeness, but declined to enter upon the subject for which I had taken the journey there, as he was about to depart for Caraccas, whither he had been ordered by Bolivar. Not willing to lose the chance of receiving the decision of the Congress before his departure, I earnestly pressed him to allow me to enter into the particulars of it. He did so, but at once told me that the Congress would never listen to any claim of the kind, as Major Beamish had not made any stipulation with the authorities of Venezuela, and his intentions were not known to them, until the arrival of the troops in the country. He afterwards mentioned the subject to some of his own friends, who were also members of the Congress, and they at once agreed, that any application to the government assembled would be useless; telling me, that as the Major had been so incautious as to equip a body of men for the service of the Republic, without first stipulating for a proportionate remuneration, his family must abide by the consequences. Equally surprised and indignant at this

ungrateful return (as I conceived it) for my deceased friend's efforts to serve the country, I shewed the letters which General Arismendez had given me, testifying the excellent discipline of the men when they arrived at Margarita, and the complete manner in which they were clothed and appointed; but was told that all were unavailing, as the Government would not consider themselves bound to satisfy any claim made under such circumstances. I then waited upon the principal members of the Congress in succession, endeavouring to interest them in the matter, but none of them gave me the slightest hope of success, though a few of them offered to support the claim if brought forward in the House. This I determined to do, not wishing to leave any chance untried of procuring a favourable issue.

The Congress having assembled, by the order of Santander, to appoint a person to fill his office during his absence at Caraccas, I attended, and with some difficulty obtained permission to state the circumstances of the claim to them. Having done so, five or six of the members arose in support of it, and argued upon the justice of the demand with great firmness and eloquence. Senors Pepys and Marco, and General Romana, were particularly anxious for the honour of their country, and to prevent the stigma which would otherwise be thrown upon its liberality and gratitude,

that it should be settled, upon the same terms as some of the others, which had been treated according to the specific contracts formed.

Three or four days after this decision, I received orders from Bolivar to take the force I had previously commanded to Portobello, where the Spaniards still were; and which, in order to prevent any further interruption from them, his Excellency had resolved to invest. Disgusted, however, at the manner in which the claims on behalf of my late friend had been received, and having but too much reason to apprehend that I should experience much the same treatment with respect to the arrears of pay and prize-money due to myself—all settlement of which had been deferred till the meeting of the Congress at Santa-fé de Bogota—I determined to leave the service altogether, unless an immediate and satisfactory guarantee were given me, that an ultimate settlement should take place. With this intention, I went with General Santander to Caraccas, and, soon after I reached it, had an opportunity of learning the ready zeal with which the Vice-President obeyed the directions of his master. Seventeen hundred Spaniards, who had composed the garrison of Caraccas, were still left in the city, under the assurance given them that they would receive honourable treatment. They had hitherto been waiting for the arrival of some vessels to convey them to Portobello, which had been purposely

delayed by the Independents, as it was the wish of Bolivar to put them out of the way. He therefore sent for Santander, to take command of the garrison he intended to leave in the city, while he went to Portobello, and ordered the Vice-President to put the whole of the prisoners to death during his absence. How this could be justified, or under what pretext it was done, I know not; it was in total violation of the treaty of Santa Anna, wherein it was agreed that the war-of-extermination should cease for ever; and that treaty was never broken by the Spaniards till after this massacre. It was also contrary to the assurances his Excellency had given, under his own hand, to the Spanish Governor, on entering the city. It was, however, in spite of all, completed; and Santander, in the literal obedience of his orders, suffered not one of them to escape. They were put to death after I left the city.

General Santander is a native of Rosario de Cucuta, where his parents had long resided before the Revolution had agitated the country, in considerable affluence and respectability. His father was a man of acknowledged talent, and had acquired great reputation for ability and integrity as a Professor of Law, for which also the General was intended. He had prosecuted his studies with great prospect of attaining celebrity, when a revolting piece of cruelty on the part of the Spa-

niards, attended by a circumstance of some singularity, occasioned an alteration in his pursuits.

After the capture of the city of Bogota by the Royalists, the father of Santander, who was strongly suspected to be inclined towards the Republican interest, was immediately taken, and, after the form of a trial, was, with many other members of his profession, put to death. At this time the whole of his family were living at Bogota, having retired thither from Cucuta on the approach of the Royalists; and, as a gratification of their diabolical revenge, the Spaniards determined to sacrifice every one of them, and commenced a most active search for them, but without effect. Santander's mother, who was aged and enfeebled, with (I believe) an only daughter, took refuge in a subterraneous cavern, not far from the city, where they remained unobserved, but suffering the most dreadful privations that could be endured, till finally the venerable parent breathed her last sigh in the arms of her daughter, being literally starved to death.

Santander, who had, in the general confusion, become separated from his relatives, unable to ascertain their retreat, fled into another province, and evaded his pursuers effectually. Meantime a young man, who so much resembled the General as to have been frequently mistaken for him by their mutual friends, was apprehended by a party

of the Spaniards, and put to instant death, his body being left to decay on the mountains where he was murdered, without burial. The sister of Santander, who had, after the decease of her mother, wandered abroad in the vain hope of meeting her brother, and of receiving some protection from him, was by chance led to the spot where the body of the young man lay, and believing, from the resemblance, that it was the object of her search, became delirious, and, after a pilgrimage of some months' continuance through the country, died.

These and other domestic calamities, with the total ruination of his prospects of rising in his profession (the policy of Morillo being to destroy all persons of education and talent) induced him to enter the army, that he might have an opportunity of avenging the manifold injuries he had sustained. Having procured a commission, he displayed great personal bravery, and soon acquired a competent knowledge of military tactics, but without gaining material promotion till he was placed under the immediate command of Bolivar. He then rose rapidly, but, according to the most popular opinions entertained respecting him in Colombia, he is more indebted for his advancement to the servility of his disposition, and the readiness with which he enters into and executes the wishes of his superiors, than to his own merits in the field, which at the same time

must be acknowledged to be great. On many trying occasions, his military skill and courage have been of the greatest service to the Patriot cause; and in others, equally perplexing, his political genius and talent for intrigue were as eminently conspicuous. As a general and a senator, he has been justly lauded and admired; but still the good qualities he possesses are unfortunately dimmed by others of an opposite nature. He is mean, selfish, and avaricious, and for the gratification of these feelings, and to gain the favor of those in authority, he is thought capable of sacrificing his dearest friends and the best interests of his country. He has been deservedly censured for his want of patriotism, which has been evinced on several occasions, having been known to accept of bribes from the Royalists, which, under the circumstances, evinced a heartless indifference to the sufferings of his countrymen, that is disgusting. One instance of the latter will suffice:

After the battle of Tunja in New Grenada, in which the troops he then commanded were completely frightened out of the field, he was detached from the main body of the Patriots, with his own force, in order to capture a battalion of the Spaniards which had rendered itself celebrated for the immense destruction of life and property it had caused, and in consequence was termed the "battalion of death." He came up with and

surrounded it by surprise, and the enemy, perceiving their own inferiority of numbers, deemed it useless to attempt to defend themselves, and with their usual pusillanimity threw down their arms. Their Commander then desired an interview with Santander, and informed the General that, if he would permit himself and men to escape, and order their arms to be restored to them, with an assurance that he would not molest them for a certain period, that he would point out a spot where he had concealed a quantity of jewels and specie, which he had amassed by plunder, and the whole of it should be the General's, if he pleased. The bargain was concluded on these terms, and the prisoners were set at liberty—the men who for years had made such havoc throughout the Republic, and perhaps the very men who had participated in the murder of his relatives.

In short, making every allowance for the irritated feelings of many of the public men of the Republic, both civil and military, who may be incited to make exaggerated statements respecting him, it is certain that Santander has had the welfare of Colombia but little at heart; on the contrary, no person can have displayed more apathy on the subject than he has ever done. He entered not the service, originally, on any truly patriotic principles, but to gratify a desire of re-

venge, which it must be allowed was extremely natural; and he has continued in it because it was the only channel left open by which he could advance himself and satisfy his ambition. He has until recently been deemed the staunch supporter of Bolivar; and whatever changes may have taken place of late, he has frequently tried to influence the people in favour of an absolute monarchy, and to invest the President with that power.

I had taken the earliest opportunity after my return from Rosario de Cucuta to represent the "*liberality*" of the Congress with regard to my claims to his Excellency, who as usual expressed great regret, surprise, and so forth, and again promised that, after the investment of Portobello, and the destruction of the Royalist force in that city, which he anticipated would take place as soon as the attack was made, he would take care that every cause I had of complaint should be removed; adding, that before he took his departure for Peru, he would see that not only myself but the whole of the British officers should be perfectly satisfied. This declaration was made at a levee in the presence of many others, who were equally afraid with myself that we should never receive anything. The whole of the British were, in fact, dispirited with the result of some similar applications to mine to the Congress; and the disgust every day increasing, the service was

likely to sustain a considerable loss, as many of them publicly asserted their intention of leaving it. Of this spirit of dissatisfaction Bolivar was perfectly aware, as almost every observation uttered by the English officers at their mess and other places of meeting was constantly reported to him by some agents, who remained a long time undiscovered ; but soon after we had left Caraccas, we accidentally found out that they were some native officers, who had by repeated efforts ingratiated themselves into the favour of the British. His Excellency, having occasion for the aid of those who wished to resign their commands at this time, was particularly anxious that they should all be pacified, till circumstances rendered it of less consequence to him. He therefore renewed all his promises to them in the most earnest and solemn manner, and amongst the rest I felt inclined to give the matter another trial, not wishing to condemn without the fullest proof. I therefore consented to resume the command of the Sambos, and received orders to prepare flecheras to convey them to Angostura, where I was directed to augment them to the number of 3000.

This completed, (after remaining a few days at the last-named city), I went down to Portobello, in fulfilment of my instructions. His Excellency, who had been there some time before, ordered me to take a portion of the blacks, and move with a

detachment of the British troops to attack and cut off a large foraging party of the Spaniards, who were then marching over a hill towards their main body in the city, where they were conveying some provisions. They had left the city two nights previously, unobserved by the investing force, and had succeeded in collecting together a good supply of cattle.

I joined the British under Major Davy, and, in conjunction with his troops, the Sambos took the whole of the enemy prisoners, and enriched the Independent camp with their arms and the herd they were driving. The peculiar features of the war were here fully manifested, and the apathy which pervaded those in command, where activity and energy were required, was shewn in the highest degree. It had been understood previously to our departure from Caraccas, that the object which the President had in view in moving the army towards Portobello, was to attack the enemy who were lodged there, and every officer in the Independent army seemed convinced that twelve hours would have made Bolivar master of the place, if a proper attack had been made; but this was not permitted. The troops, having reached the end of their march, were ordered to remain there, comfortably taking up their quarters before the walls; the Patriot chief preferring the more tedious method of starving them into a capitula-

tion, to that of making any direct attempt upon the place.

The impolicy of this plan may be easily conceived; the army of course required provisions, which, in consequence of the length of time the Spaniards had been there, were exceedingly scarce in that part of the country. Again, as no exertions were used to keep up the discipline of the forces, who were daily passing their time in sloth, they became at length regardless of subordination, were attacked by disease, and once more relapsed into that recklessness of consequences which they had fallen into on their first campaign. The Spanish generals perceiving all this, took advantage of it, and made several attacks upon us; and although they were repulsed, and generally with a diminution of their number, still it was not without loss on the Republican side. These losses, indeed, in all human probability, equalled, if not exceeded that which would have been sustained in a regular attack upon the city, which, had it taken place, would have prevented the sickness and privation which now shewed themselves through our ranks. However, results like these were but seldom calculated on, or even thought of. The grand sources of all the disasters which accrued to the Patriots were their own weakness, indecision, jealousy of each other, procrastination, and indolence. A due degree of firm-

ness and activity would have gained them all they have acquired, with a much less effusion of blood, one-third of the waste of property, and in a fourth of the time it has cost them to achieve their independence. All the advantages which they have gained during two or three months' hard fighting, and all those to which they might have fairly looked forward from the state of their army, the ardour of the troops themselves, the friendly disposition of the natives, and above all, the reduced and disheartened state of the Royalists, have been frequently sacrificed by the weakness, envy, or idleness of a chief, who has either not known what to do, or has been jealous of the movements of a rival whom he dreaded, and therefore injured the cause of his country to thwart. In the absence of these incentives, to occupy some snug encampment, and spend his time in gambling with his officers, has often been a chief consideration with one of these leaders. These are facts too well known in the service to admit of contradiction, and their baneful effects have been sufficiently obvious.

General Morales having taken advantage of the want of vigilance displayed by the Independent troops, escaped with his force across the province; and Paez, who was heartily tired of the monotonous life pursued by the whole army, determined upon going after them, in opposition to the will of

the President. I made an application at this time to be allowed to join Paez, but was refused. The brave General followed up the enemy closely, and forced them to an engagement; but as they could not be brought to make any stand, their loss was but trifling. Meantime, we were still lying before the town, without making any effort to take it or to keep the enemy within the walls. They were constantly making excursions, unnoticed by the Republicans, and generally returned enriched with provisions and stores, the plunder of the inhabitants of the province. There is a large watch-tower or fort that commands the whole of Portobello, called Mirandos de Solano, which, in an attempt to take the town, must be the principal object of the besiegers. Had it been properly stormed at the onset, it must have unavoidably yielded, after which it would have been impossible for the enemy to have kept the troops out of the town itself. This being neglected, the siege (if such it may be termed) was protracted during a period of nine months.*

* It did not surrender till the latter end of May 1822, when the approach of General Paez, who was then in command, during the absence of General Bolivar in Quito, and, freed from the shackles which had been previously thrown over his actions, soon induced the enemy to surrender. The garrison received every honourable protection, and Paez finally gave it safe conduct to Porto Rico.

The Spaniards under La Torre now grew very daring, and we were chiefly engaged in resisting their attacks upon us, which kept up a continued series of skirmishes for many days. We were at first taken by surprise, and suffered some loss; but, at length, the enemy were glad to leave us unmolested. Not long after Paez had left us, intelligence reached the President that a very strong reinforcement had landed at Ocumare from Spain, and remained there waiting for further orders from La Torre. I was directed to join a body of native troops under Solano, and to destroy them ere they could join the standard of either of the Royalist generals.

A march through this part of the country at that period could not fail to most forcibly impress an observer with the dreadful effects which the war and the previous cruelty of the Spaniards had produced on the population of that province. Perhaps no part of the Republic has suffered such a serious diminution of its inhabitants as the provinces of Maracaibo, Rio-de-la-Hacha, and Portobello. Here, for several leagues, were to be seen beautiful tracts of country, once thickly inhabited by a thriving population, the traces of whose labours were still to be seen in the manner in which the grounds had been evidently laid out in plantations; but not a soul was to be perceived. All was dreary, desolate, and cheerless;

and during a march of two or three-days' continuance, not a sound or sign of existing humanity was to be seen or heard.* I have examined many calculations on the population of Colombia, and am decidedly of opinion, from ocular demonstration during my travels through the various parts I have stated, and also from the observations of my companions in the service, and others who have had a more intimate acquaintance with the interior than I have had, that they are incorrect. This has no doubt arisen from the well-known and generally admitted circumstance, that the government has never yet had any census the accuracy of which could be relied on. It is even probable that some years will elapse before it can accomplish one, as it must, of necessity, be an undertaking of considerable difficulty.

At the time I was in Colombia, it was the opinion of most officers of the government, both civil and military, that three millions were considerably under the number of souls in the two Vice-Royalties, exclusive of the almost innumerable tribes of Indians† which inhabit the interior.

* In the mountainous districts this is by no means an uncommon occurrence, even for a much longer time; but it is rarely to be met with in the delightful lowlands of either Venezuela or New Grenada, excepting in the provinces before named.

† In the province of Cumana alone, there are fourteen tribes

The whole may be classed under the following heads. Creoles, who are descendants of the Spanish invaders, and of those emigrants from the mother country who arrived in the Republic subsequent to the invasion; Sambos, who have been before described; Mestizos, a peculiar race, inhabiting many parts of the plains; a few Negroes, and the Indians. Among the latter, each tribe has its peculiar name; but to repeat their appellations here would only serve to give a confused idea of them, while it would be useless, as they are all included under the heads already mentioned. The horrible scourge of extermination, which lasted nearly thirteen years, fell heavily on the first, so that they now bear but a very small proportion to the others. The Sambos, who are always, from their natural disposition for plunder and roving, scattered, not only in various parts of the Republic, but in the Caribbee islands, have also suffered severely in consequence of their warlike habits; while the Negroes, who are the unmixed descendants of the African slaves imported by the conquerors, have been much diminished by the horrible cruelties practised upon them, and the unwholesomeness of the atmosphere in the mines in which they have been compelled to work.

of Indians, besides many others in different parts, particularly the Guahira country.

The Indians, who as already stated are exceedingly numerous, are spread throughout the entire territory, and are represented to have increased since the introduction of the slaves, which materially lessened their labours, and, consequently, the numbers that were daily sacrificed in the mines. There are some tribes of them who are said to be very warlike in their disposition ; but I cannot say that I ever saw such a spirit manifested, to any great degree, amongst those I have occasionally served with. Indeed their principal aim appeared to be that of living undisturbed in their own wilds ; and as they were at this time no longer required to toil for the conquerors, their poverty secured them their independence, of which neither party deemed it worth while to deprive them. Those who have served with the army have been generally tempted by fair promises, made by the native chiefs, to volunteer for a time, but they have, whenever any particular danger threatened, fled before the enemy, and could not on such occasions ever be induced to rally. The Patriot Generals, being aware of this weakness, never employed them as regular troops, but chiefly to enter the field after the fate of a battle had been decided, to dispatch the prisoners and plunder the dead ; and also, whenever the enemy was marching to any point, parties of them were detached to the woods to cut off all stragglers, and otherwise

harass and annoy them. Those inhabiting the Isthmus of Darien, and the woods near the rivers Mita and Apure, are exceedingly numerous ; but, nevertheless, the whole forms a population wretchedly inferior and disproportioned to the vast extent of country under the government of Colombia, which is at least capable of containing, and, if properly cultivated, of subsisting, 120,000,000 inhabitants. The provinces of Barcelona, Cumana, and Guyana, have been in a great measure swept of their population, as, during the whole time occupied by the great struggle for liberty, the desolating war raged without intermission in these parts, and in Portobello and the adjoining provinces. Indeed Venezuela throughout formed the principal seat of action, and as the Republican army, excepting the foreign auxiliaries, were chiefly composed of its people, the Creoles of that Vice-royalty do not bear a proportion of more than two-fifths to those of New Grenada. For the same reason the Venezuelans are more chivalrous, and habituated to war, and have ever proved themselves superior in the field to the people of the sister division.

The troops continued forwards, until they arrived at a small plain, about five miles from Ocumare, where the enemy were encamped, and had thrown up a sort of stockade for their defence. We were surprised to find that, instead of a numerous body,

as we had been led to expect, there were only 600 of them. On our approach they gave us a sharp volley from behind their temporary shelter, but the blacks soon cleared it, and had put several to the sword, before it could be prevented. After a short struggle they laid down their arms, and surrendered all their baggage, and a good supply of military stores, which they had brought with them for the use of Morales. Thus enriched, we made the best of our way back to Portobello, and having delivered up the prisoners and spoil to the President, received his thanks for the trifling service rendered at Ocumare.*

Conceiving that, as no immediate operations were likely to take place I might occupy the time which was otherwise likely to be spent in indolence, in another attempt to prosecute the claims in behalf of the late Major Beamish, I applied to his Excellency for the documents and assistance he had promised me. These, he told me, would not be of the least service; as from communications he had received from the leading members of the Congress, in reply to letters he

* This has been particularly unfortunate as a landing-place for the reinforcements sent out by the court of Spain. Not less than five bodies of troops have fallen into the hands of the Republicans there, at different times. One instance occurred after that just related; in which they were all killed or taken prisoners, to the amount of 500.

had written them on the subject, he found that they were resolved not to alter their former determination, and would not listen to any further application on the subject.

My constitution was now so considerably impaired by the harassing nature of the service and the effects of the climate, together with some hurts which I had received, that feeling there was not sufficient encouragement held out to me to stay longer in the country, I respectfully stated to the President my determination of quitting the service altogether. His Excellency expressed great regret at the conduct of the Congress, and acknowledged the injustice of it, but would not listen to my leaving the service; however, as I was not inclined to alter the intention I had expressed, he gave me a flattering certificate of my conduct while in command, and permission to retire to Margarita, or any other place I might chuse, till my health was perfectly re-established; and should I not feel inclined to join the service again, after a mature consideration, he assured me that, as soon as the affairs of the country would permit, my own claims should be perfectly satisfied. I believe these assurances would have been fulfilled if the government had been in a situation to pay off the demands upon it; but unfortunately this has not been the case, and as yet no settlement has been made.

I now took a farewell of the army, and went to Margarita, where I was received by General Arismendez with his usual kindness and cordiality. I stayed there about three weeks, and then went to Maracaibo, where I understood there were two vessels ready to sail for Liverpool; but finding that they had left that port for the island of Curaçoa, which is about five days' sail from it, I took my passage on board a small, but fast-sailing schooner, for the island; but the day after we had crossed the bar, we unluckily fell in with a large Spanish privateer, which at once gave us chase. We had not the slightest means of defence, the schooner being without any kind of arms, so that our only chance was our superiority of sailing, which eventually enabled us to leave the enemy far behind, after a chase of about thirty hours, during which they had fired several shots at us without effect.

Being subsequently driven out of our course by contrary winds, we were detained till after the vessels had sailed, and I had therefore no alternative but that of going back again to Margarita, which I did; and soon after a brig bound for England touched there, on board of which I took my passage. While on the island an English lady, whose husband had died in the Republican service, was placed under my protection, during the voyage home, by a relation who was unable to

accompany her himself. Having secured berths for myself and fair companion, I went on board, first taking another farewell of the worthy old General Arismendez, and in the course of the evening sailed. The same kind of adverse fortune attended me in this instance, as had displayed itself in many others during the period of my service under the Republic. About eight or ten days after we had left Margarita, while going, with a fair wind, through the windward passage, the brig struck with a heavy shock, about 10 P. M. on a sunken reef of one of the Bahamas, termed South Crooked Island. This happened, I believe, solely through the combination of obstinacy and ignorance which characterised the master. He had yielded to some remonstrances offered to him some time before the accident occurred, as to the impropriety of carrying a press of sail under such circumstances; but the passengers having left the deck and retired for the night, he again set all that had been before taken in, and as I afterwards understood (for I was in my hammock at the time) the vessel was going at the rate of eleven knots, and the force of her canvass drove her completely over one reef, at the same time carrying away her fore foot and keel, and pitched her completely against another.

About this time I reached the deck, and found the scene anything but pleasant. The fore-top-

mast was gone over the side, and the main-top-gallant-mast soon went after it, the rudder had been unshipped, and being still hung by the chains, was beating against the stern of the vessel with great violence; in short, all was in the utmost confusion. The master stood completely unnerved and in silent despair; and the crew, breaking into the greatest insubordination, were eagerly seeking the means of ensuring their own safety alone, leaving passengers, ship, cargo, and everything else, to shift for themselves and take their chance.

I could plainly perceive, that unless something was effected by dint of perseverance, that we should be left behind, and in the situation we were in there could be no hope of escaping. Consulting, therefore, for a moment with the only male passenger on board, besides myself, I determined to interfere, conceiving that I was bound by the charge I then had to do so. We endeavoured to bring the master to his recollection, and, with the aid of our fair friend, who displayed the most admirable presence of mind and contempt of danger, succeeded in calming him. He let go an anchor, bent to a chain cable, and thus brought the brig up in a narrow channel between two coral reefs. Here we could have cleared the wreck, and by waiting for the next tide we might have got the vessel out, and taken her to some

place where she might have been repaired, if the crew would have exerted themselves ; but, instead of making a single attempt, after letting go the anchor, they went below to the spirits, to drown their apprehensions in grog. The captain too, soon left us in the lurch. He had, with the help of the two apprentices, got out the jolly boat, with a view, as he said, to ascertain by soundings, if there was a prospect of getting the vessel out at once, which, he professed to imagine could be done, but to our additional comfort, we saw him pull away with all his strength, and finally disappear.

Thus abandoned, and finding that no dependence could be placed upon the mate, my fellow passenger and self began to use every means in our power to save our lives, and that of the lady. In these we were aided by the latter, who, when we took our pistols, with a fixed determination of using them if other means failed, insisted upon having one, and would, I have no doubt, have used it gallantly had it been required. We went down to the crew, and expostulated with them on the weakness of their conduct, and with some difficulty prevailed upon four of them to exert themselves. The others were too much intoxicated, and we left them to their fate. We now hoisted out the long boat, and prepared to get in it ; but here my female friend, whose courage never yielded in the most trying part of our

situation, became suddenly overpowered, perhaps by the emotion she felt on the prospect of deliverance, and as she was stepping into the boat, fainted and fell overboard. Myself, and two of the sailors swam after her and succeeded in sustaining her above water, in the hope of reaching the boat, which was not an easy matter, because of the surf which was heaving and beating us against the rocks. While we were making the attempt, the boat was upset, and my fellow passenger drowned, while the two sailors in her escaped by swimming ashore. Our chance of escape was now reduced to a very slender one indeed, as the distance to the shore was two miles through a continuation of breakers. The tide was luckily part receding, which left certain portions of the reefs above water, and on them we occasionally rested, after swimming a short distance. The sailors left me and the lady beforementioned, in order to get the long boat, but as there appeared but little prospect of their success, I made the best of my way without them, and at length reached the shore, with my almost lifeless burthen, in safety, thoroughly exhausted. The men having regained the boat, we returned to the brig and procured some sails, with which I erected a kind of tent for my companion, and then, after a little rest, commenced operations upon the wreck by endeavouring to save as much of the cargo as pos-

sible. During the first night and day, with the aid of the four men, I continued to get a great deal of indigo, cochineal, and a considerable number of hides on shore, but then the men refused to work any longer, thinking we should be all starved to death.

That part of the island upon which we landed was perfectly sterile. There was not a habitation within twenty miles, and it afforded not the least food of any kind, save some shell fish on the shore, and as the brig had, by continual beating, made a quantity of water, the bread was reduced to a mere paste, and everything below was afloat. They therefore wanted to take the boat, and endeavour to procure some assistance; but fearing that I might be left, as in the instance of the master, I determined to hazard anything rather than part with it. They then changed their plan, and went across the island on foot, and I never afterwards saw them. All my attempts, subsequently to getting on shore, to rouse the mate and his companion from their state of inebriety, were abortive; they continued to drink till they were overpowered, and then slept, and then drank, and slept by turns, till the brig went to pieces, when they were lost.

Having renewed my exertions, I got some more hides, &c. on shore, and finally, saved all within about ten or twelve scroons of the indigo. The remainder of the cargo, being fustic, which was



APPENDIX.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

REPUBLICS OF SOUTH AMERICA.

THE present existence of the States of South America, which have risen from the ruins of the monarchies of Spain and Portugal, has originated less in moral than in physical causes. The source of the Revolution cannot be supposed to have been that light of understanding produced by civilization, that intellectual wisdom which is the result of a high state of cultivation, or that noble desire of freedom which nature is supposed to have implanted in the minds of all men. Had it emanated from any one of these, it would have been effected many years before it was attempted, and would not have met that opposition in its progress which it so frequently and injuriously experienced, from all classes of the natives in turn. Neither did it arise from one general and universal wish to throw off their fetters. It has been satisfactorily proved, that the commencement of the Revolution took place only under the auspices of a few, who happened about that time to have suffered more than usual from the cruelty and rapacity of the Spaniards; and these very people (the inhabitants of Caraccas) who primarily

manifested the desire of casting away the yoke under which they had so long bowed, were the first to return to the cause of the Royalists, to meanly sue for pardon, and to leave those who had been their leaders to meet their fate from the hands of a treacherous enemy. Nor was this instance, afforded by the people of Caraccas, the only one; unhappily, many other districts and provinces gave the same melancholy evidence, that their opposition to the dominion of the mother country was merely offered in order to get their temporary grievances redressed, and not to complete the permanent establishment of their liberty. Indeed it is but too probable, that nine-tenths of the Creole population did not understand the term, and had not an idea or hope beyond that of living in a state of filth and indolence unmolested, which they were prevented from doing by the contributions that were alternately levied on them by both sides. That the people, generally speaking, were averse to any new form of government, was sufficiently shewn by the circumstance of their having frequently, during the course of the war, petitioned the Spanish authorities to pardon them for having joined the Independent standard, and to permit them to return to their "own government," as they ever termed the tyranny that was exercised over them. Immediate personal convenience, indeed, was always their primary consideration; and to save themselves any kind of unpleasantness, they were Royalists and Insurgents alternately, just as either party obtained the ascendancy, or their forces approached the districts which they inhabited.

If the administrators of corrupt and oppressive despotisms could but be induced to think so, the history of every revolution goes far to prove that speculative opinions do little to promote them, except in direct connexion with practical

grievances. A sort of *salutary vis inertiae* forms one of the primary elements of the social state ; and it seldom yields to mere theory, or even to conviction produced by a higher order of experience, unless the understanding of the mass of the community be goaded by some undeniable evidences into a perception of the necessity or utility of the meditated change. If there be any exception to this general truth, it must be sought for rather in the restlessness of over-active intellect, than in the sleepy apathy, sensual enjoyment, and superstitious ignorance of the inhabitants of the former Spanish colonies of South America. In Colombia, for instance, for a period of three hundred years, the iron hand of despotism had, in league with the most interested priestcraft, cast a mantle of intellectual night over the whole population ; and all approach to mental improvement was completely cut off by the invidious policy exercised over them. Everything which tended to the development of superior faculties, was systematically precluded ; and in the sequel the people were unquestionably reduced to nearly the lowest degree in the scale of civilization.

Happily, however, there is no reducing human nature to an utter insensibility to physical evils and unrelenting oppression ; and to free themselves from the unlimited sacrifices of life and property which were daily demanded of them, the unhappy sufferers were ultimately goaded to make some efforts. But even when, by a greater intercourse with the people of other nations, they were in some measure compelled to open their eyes to the blessings of liberty, their former protracted submission to a state of perfect slavery had fixed in their minds inveterate habits and opinions, which can only be expected to yield to the gradual operation of time and education. A thorough change of condi-

tion cannot reasonably be expected at once; it will, nay must, take a long series of years to do away with sentiments and propensities so involuntarily cherished; and it may with propriety be questioned if, in the present generation, they can be banished at all.

In short, however surprising it may appear, there are many, perhaps a majority, now in the republic of Colombia (which more immediately comes into consideration in this place than any other), who would hail with gladness the re-establishment of the Spanish Vice-royalties, and who would enthusiastically fly to the Royalist standard if it were once reared in their vicinity. Education will undoubtedly effect much with such a people; but it will produce little change upon any but the rising generation. The adults are too indolent and too bigoted to submit to anything which would either tend to their own intellectual improvement, or the advancement of knowledge generally. The next age, if the government be enabled to extend its views as regards the moral improvement of the country, may possibly be one of comparatively enlightened principles, and capable of gaining ground upon other nations; but under all circumstances, the progress will be slow. The existing population are a most wavering, fickle, and capricious race, who are never decided on any point; but always unsettled, unsteady, and dissatisfied. Weakness and discontent are the prominent features in the national character; and these, combined with pride, indolence, and a great disregard of all intellectual pursuits, render them by no means an easy people to manage or enlighten. The influence of tyranny and monkish superstition, which has been so powerful in Colombia, has, in the first place, entirely vitiated their sense of morality, and subjected them to the dominion of errors and vices,

which cannot be materially assailed until the institutions now happily rising in the New World, under all its social disadvantages, are in active operation. By these, and by the wise and temperate regulations of a firm, vigorous, and patriotic administration, alone, can a healthy perception of the genuine distinction between right and wrong, be permanently engrafted. The minds of such a people must be made stronger by degrees, and accustomed to the cheering spirit of liberty, without endangering their reason, which is yet weak, by exposing them to an intoxicating participation of power. New laws, however good and justly founded, will not be instantly respected by men who have been so suddenly transported from slavery to freedom, that they cannot comprehend their end or utility, and may therefore consider them hostile to their interests, as they certainly are to their enjoyments and opinions. These at present have their sources in an immoral and unrestrained gratification of appetites wholly of a sensual description, and in a state of ignorance from which they will never spontaneously or voluntarily emerge, although they may gradually be delivered by the unceasing acquirement of new lights from without, and the diffusion of education within.

It therefore becomes a great question, what form of government is best calculated to quicken and advance a people so circumstanced; to promote the future political interests and welfare of the country; and, at the same time, to give that satisfaction intermediately, which is essential to a steady, progressive, and effective government. It is obvious that opposing theorists will seek to solve this problem conformably to their preceding convictions and principles; but taking into due consideration the actions, manners, wants, and peculiar situation of the inhabitants of Colombia,

all will agree that it should, upon every plan, possess an executive with so much independence, strength, and dignity, as will prevent its condescending to become the tool of every party in turn, or proving unable to ensure and compel a due respect for the established laws. Perhaps this latter power is the only one on which the structure of the liberty of such a state can firmly rest. To combine this necessary strength with a due regard to the legislative functions and to general liberty, is the great secret of all free government, requiring a degree of knowledge in the legislator, and of patriotism and principle in the functionary, which are seldom to be found even in higher cultivated countries than Colombia. Unfortunately for the Republic, there are few such men in it; each appears striving for the aggrandisement of himself or his patrons, the result of which is, that the country is overwhelmed with different parties and factions, which are continually involving it in disputes and broils. Hence has arisen the many dissensions and the alarming discontent which have sprung up since the acquirement of its independence; and which will, it is to be feared, either end in a military despotism, or prove the source of numberless divisions, that may ultimately subvert the government, and separate the mass of people into clans, each with its respective chief; thereby subjecting the country not only to military government, but to such government in its most divided and odious form.

Power, therefore, must for some time to come be freely entrusted somewhere, as also exclusive rights: to attempt an unmixed democracy amongst a people who have so recently been emancipated from the thralldom of despotism, and where some portion of the inhabitants have been so very lately purchased and sold openly as slaves, is impracticable. The bles-

sings of political and civil rights would be lost upon those who are not yet free from the dominion of ignorance and the effects of the superstition which the priesthood have so forcibly impressed upon them; and by whom all that is liberal, philosophical, and much that is rational, is either not understood or held in derision. A pure system of equality for such a population is not only impracticable and ridiculous, but, if effected, it would be highly dangerous. To reduce men of talent, property, commercial influence, and speculation, all which generally beget a degree of liberality, and give opportunities for the acquirement of a knowledge of the laws and institutions which are adopted with advantage in other countries, and of the means of connecting principle with practice,—to reduce such men to a mere parity with the absolutely ignorant and newly emancipated races, would be not only unjust and impolitic, but eventually destructive to the Republic. The interests of the merchant, in particular, are closely connected and interwoven with those of the people, with the cause of freedom, and with the perfect establishment and consolidation of a new order of things; and as, for their own benefit, they would have these advantageous to the country, the preservation of their ascendancy is absolutely essential to the establishment of good government in Colombia.

To all, in fact, who have taken the pains to become acquainted with the circumstances of the Republic, it is obvious that, in its present state, the links which connect property with foreign and national commerce, supply the best, if not the only materials, for an intermediate chain, that will hold the country to an improving and prosperous career. To deny, therefore, the holders of these links a very

ascendant share in the legislature, would be to confer the authority upon those who are most interested in, or who would be most benefited by, disorder and slavery—the military or the priesthood, neither of whom are calculated, from previous habits and pursuits, either conjointly or separately, to beneficially govern the country. If not these, who must be invested with the power—the bulk of the people? These are not only ignorant of the nature of the duties they would have to perform, but in Colombia, owing to the opinions they have imbibed, the uncontrolled passions in which they indulge (which are proverbially gross and violent) and their eagerness for self-aggrandisement, the last persons in the universe in whose hands the least power ought to be trusted. Having everything to gain, and nothing to lose, a state of anarchy and confusion, by which they could enrich themselves, would be preferable in their eyes to regularity and system, that would merely ensure them a gradual benefit in common with others. The country would always be burthened with insupportable demands, and plunged into struggles and disorder that would be interminable, or terminable only by successful attacks from foreign powers, who would by its inward dissensions, be induced to attempt its subjugation. It would indeed, in all probability, be once more doomed to its ancient ignorance and oppression beneath the yoke of the mother country.

Whatever may be thought of this reasoning as regards any probable course of action, it is certain that the acquirement of influence, and of progressive weight in the Legislature, on the part of the better-informed commercial class, and of the most educated civilians, will alone enable Colombia to find repose under a system of government similar to that

of North America. Of all others, a federal union of that description would be most adapted to insure a permanent enjoyment of the blessings of freedom, and to cement the bond of mutual obligation and of religious faith and toleration in Colombia. Although, except as to the grand divisions of the two previous Vice-royalties of New Grenada and Venezuela, the vast territory of Colombia has never been parcelled out into separate states like those of the North, the territory is by nature subdivided into very distinct communities, with interests sufficiently important for local state governments. Whether they could supply materials for divisional assemblies is, indeed, very disputable; and the means by which such local authorities could be held in due subjection to a General Congress, is still more doubtful; but, if possible, the federal scheme would be a great improvement upon the existing one, as it would tend more directly to the diffusion of political talent and capability, and to dissipate, rather than to concentrate that spirit of intrigue and of personal aggrandisement, which is the grand social disease of South America. This, however, by the way: whether federally or otherwise constituted, Colombia has no chance for the attainment of a similar state of freedom and prosperity to that enjoyed by the United States, but as a republic. Should the government become monarchical, whatever forms may be retained, it will in fact be despotic and military. However paramount the influence of him who would most likely wield the sceptre in the first place, his ambition would be encountered by too many rival individuals and parties, to allow the maintenance of his royalty by any other means than the sword. The share of power which is thereby acquired, and for years

maintained, is seldom voluntarily given up again; and although the form of a Chamber or Chambers might be preserved, as in France under Napoleon, the throne would essentially rest on a military basis; and whatever rests principally upon such a foundation, however the real state of the case may be temporarily palliated and disguised, must, from the nature of things, be virtually despotic.

There also exists another and very forcible reason for the avoidance of regal government in these unsettled countries, which consists in its comparative expense. For a long time to come at least, nothing like a royal establishment, with its necessary patronage, revenue, and state, could be supported by populations, whose immediate resources are so limited, and the development of whose agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing capabilities has scarcely commenced. It must be obvious to politicians of every class, that ancient monarchies have generally been found stable in proportion to their means of diffusion, and too frequently of *profusion*; and the experience of every day proves, that the power of the crown can be no otherwise supported in its pretensions to absolute, indefeasible right, as the sole fountain of executive authority; or even when, admitting a constitution of balances, to the possession of a veto in the legislature. This is so true, that we every day hear of the most obvious waste and diversion of the national income defended on this express ground. Now what is necessary to prop up ancient and acknowledged power, that has grown up in accordance with the habits, ideas, and prejudices of a people, will be doubly necessary in aid of a new sovereignty, which not only would have nothing of this sort to rely upon, but everything the reverse to en-

counter; independently of the rivalry of individuals of correspondent pretensions, who, if to be satisfied at all, are only to be quieted upon some scheme which will gratify their ambition, their avarice, or both. Napoleon Buonaparte was a great man, but the moment he erected himself into a sovereign and hereditary ruler, marshals' batons and dukedoms began to multiply. Foreign conquests enabled him to act this part without internal injury to the people of France; but it may be doubted if he could have been quite so profuse, had the funds been altogether domestic. The new governments of South America have nothing either in present possession, or of probable acquirement, to bear the expense of this sort of support, without which, as already stated, monarchy, whether nominally limited or absolute, is powerless.

But while, for these and various other reasons which might be specified, it is obvious that monarchy is but little adapted for Colombia, it is equally so that many of the elements are wanting for that sort of moderate, limited, and democratic executive which administers the affairs of the United States with so much general efficacy and wisdom. An executive, to be enabled to advance the political growth of republics of Spanish origin, the population of which consists of different races, some of them semi-barbarous, and all of them extremely ignorant, must be more powerful than that of North America. *Hinc illa lachrymæ!* A very powerful President is so closely on the verge of royalty, nothing but great patriotism and self-denial on his own part, and extraordinary public virtue in other quarters, can prevent him from crossing the boundary. While this sort of virtue is at all times very rare, nothing is more

common than for a naturally aspiring mind to be goaded into lofty acquirement by a powerful party, who thinks that it will profit by his advancement. The result of such and similar movements are in fact, at this moment, under anticipation. It is quite manifest that, with certain powerful parties in Colombia, a monarchical government would be the favourite one, provided the crown fell into the grasp of the celebrated individual who has been their choice for many years. This faction is powerful both in numerical and political strength; and although it has hitherto confined its efforts to indirect workings upon the minds of the people, it is not unlikely that every nerve will soon be strained in an open struggle for the attainment of the desired object. A national convention is about to meet for an ultimate settlement of the government, when there is every reason to believe that some modification of the nature specified will be hazarded. On the other hand, it is quite as evident that there are numerous interests and individuals, who, however opposed to each other, are equally determined both against monarchy and the intended monarch. Many of these not merely command troops, but troops who are devoted partisans and followers. Will they remain collectively strong enough to prevent the transformation of a President into a King? That forms the leading part of the great question; but another remains behind, of scarcely less importance. If strong enough to maintain the name of Republic, will they agree as to the kind of one it shall be? This is much to be doubted; and hence, according to all present appearances, the too probable fate of Colombia. A military monarchy affecting a balance of powers, but actually despotic; or the mere name of a

Republic, changing masters from time to time, after the manner of the most turbulent democracies of ancient Greece,—these appear to be the alternatives. It is scarcely necessary to add, that if such a state of things did not invite—nay demand—foreign interference of a more general description, the mother country would not for ever remain insensible to the value of such an opportunity to recover her ascendancy; and after years of struggle and sacrifice, these important countries might once more acknowledge the dominion of Spain. Her hopes in regard to the recovery of Mexico are apparent, from the pending expedition under Admiral La Borde; and although Colombia, as the preceding narrative will shew, is a less inviting field for renovated action, a lengthened state of disorder may ultimately make it so, and for centuries seal the fate of this important portion of the Transatlantic world.

The above had been transmitted to the press, when the Address of Bolivar to the Convention of Colombia reached England. Its contents are not of a nature to induce the author to modify any portion of his previous statement. In the necessity of a stronger executive, he agrees with the President's Address. The settlement of a due distribution of forces between the legislative and the executive functions is equally desirable. Bolivar is also both eloquent and veracious with regard to the anarchy and disorder which prevail in Colombia; but there is little or nothing definite in his recommendation. "Give us," he observes, "a government under which the laws shall be obeyed, the magistrate respected, and the people free." Is this a periphrasis for limited monarchy? The question will soon be resolved. In the mean time, this document affords so timely

a commentary upon much of the incident and conduct described in the preceding pages, and forms so fair an illustration of many of the opinions therein hazarded, it has been thought proper, at the expense of a few pages of letter-press, to append it to the volume.

June 18, 1828.

ADDRESS OF BOLIVAR
TO THE
CONVENTION OF COLOMBIA.

*To the Representatives of the People in
National Convention.*

FELLOW CITIZENS,

I congratulate you on the honour you have deserved at the hands of the nation, which has confided to you its high destinies. In representing the legitimate interests of Colombia, you are invested with powers the most sublime. I also have the greatest happiness in restoring to you the authority which had been placed in my wearied hands; to those who possess the affections of the people belong the attributes of sovereignty—the rights of supremacy—as delegates of the omnipotent august power, whose subject and soldier I am. To what higher power could I resign the baton of President, and the sword of General? Dispose freely of these symbols of authority and glory for the benefit of the common cause, without regard to personal considerations, which you might find an impediment to a perfect reform.

Called on by my duties to exhibit to you the situation of the Republic, I shall have the pain of presenting you the picture of its afflictions. Do not imagine that the colours I make use of derive a glow from exaggeration, nor that I have sought for them in the gloomy mansion of mystery; they correctly reflect the glare of public scandal, nor can the picture, in the abstract, appear to you incorrect. If it were so, would Colombia have called you together?

The evils of the country have begun to subside from the moment that her deputies prepare for the investigation of them. Your task is, indeed, as difficult as it is glorious; and, although the difficulties have somewhat diminished by the good fortune of finding Colombia united and obedient to your decision, I must tell you that we are indebted for this inestimable advantage solely to the hopes reposed in the Convention—hopes which evince the national confidence and the weight you have to sustain.

To discover the causes of our decline, it will be sufficient to cast a glance over our history. Colombia, which was able to raise herself into existence, is now feeble and declining. Identified before with the public good, she no longer conceives her duty as the only rule of safety. The same men who, during the struggle, were contented in their poverty, and who did not owe three millions (dollars) to foreigners, have, in order to maintain peace, had to load themselves with debts shameful in their consequences. Colombia, who, in face of the hosts of oppressors, breathes only refined honour and virtue, endures with apparent insensibility the national discredit. Colombia, who only thought on painful sacrifices, on eminent services, is now occupied solely with its rights, while it entirely neglects

its duties. The nation would have perished, if a remnant of public spirit had not impelled it to call for the remedy, and rescued it on the brink of the grave. A horrible peril would alone have made us think on the alteration of the fundamental laws; this peril alone was capable of making itself superior to our devotion to legitimate institutions of our own creation, the principles of which had procured for us the desired emancipation.

I would add nothing to this fatal picture, if the post I occupy did not compel me to expose to the nation the practical ill consequences of its laws. I know that I cannot do this without exposing myself to similar interpretations, and that my words will be construed into ambitious ideas; but I, who have not refused to devote to Colombia my existence and reputation, conceive myself bound to make this last sacrifice.

I must confess it; our form of Government is essentially defective. Without considering that we are only just entered into political existence, we have allowed ourselves to be hallucinated by aspiring theories, superior even to those which the history of all ages has proved to be incompatible with human nature. At other times we have erred in the means, and ascribed the failure to not having kept sufficiently close to the deceitful guide who was leading us astray, regardless of those who were desirous of following the natural order of things, and of comparing with each other the different parts of our constitution, and the whole with our education, customs, and inexperience, in order that we might not plunge into a troubled ocean.

Our respective powers are not distributed as required by social order and the good of the citizens. We have

made of the legislative the only sovereign body, whereas it should merely be a member of this sovereign. We have subjected it to the executive, and we have given to it a much greater part in the general administration than what our true interest permits. As the climax of error, all the strength has been placed in the will, and all the weakness in the movement and action of the social body.

The right of presenting projects of laws has been left exclusively to the legislative, which, from its nature, is far from being able to know the real state of the Government, and is purely theoretic.

The power of objecting to the laws enjoyed by the executive, is so much the more inefficacious, as the delicacy of Congress is offended by contradiction. The latter may carry its point even with the support of one-fifth, or less than one-fifth part of its members, which leave no means of avoiding the evil.

The free ingress of the Secretaries of State into the Chambers, to explain the motives of the Government, being prohibited, there is not even left the adoption of this measure, for the purpose of enlightening the legislature on the motives of the rejection of any of its resolutions. Much evil might have been avoided by allowing a certain lapse of time, or a proportionate number of votes, considerably greater than what is at present required, before giving validity to the laws objected to by the executive.

Let it be observed, that our code of laws, already too voluminous, instead of contributing to our felicity, presents obstacles to its progress. Our laws appear to have been formed at random; they are defective in union, in method, in classification, and in legal idiom. They are at variance

with each other, replete with confusion, often superfluous, and even opposed to the ends they are intended to promote. Examples are not wanting of its having become indispensable to restrain, by rigorous measures, destructive and widely spreading evils; and the law, made in consequence, has proved even less effective than the old ones, by indirectly protecting the vices which it was wished to check.

In our endeavours to reach perfection, we adopt, as a basis of representation, a scale as yet unsuited to our capacity. By the prodigal dispensation of this august function, it is become degraded, and it has even appeared, in some provinces, that, to represent the people is an object of indifference, and even one of dubious honour. Thus has originated, in a degree, the discredit into which the laws have fallen; and with the laws in contempt, what good can be expected from them?

The executive of Colombia is not on an equality with the legislative; neither is it the head of the judicial power; it is reduced to an impotent instrument of the supreme power, in which it does not participate in the degree it ought to do; seeing that Congress encroaches on its natural functions in the administration of judicial, ecclesiastical, and military affairs. The Government, which ought to be the source and impulse of the public force, has to seek it out of the limits of its own resources, and to look for support to others which ought to be subjected to itself. It is an essential characteristic of Government to be the centre and depository of strength, without possessing the power to call it into action. Having been deprived of its natural functions, it sinks into a lethargy which becomes fatal to

the citizens, and which entails the downfall of its institution.

The vices of the Constitution, with reference to the executive, do not end here. Equally prejudicial as the above, is the want of responsibility of the Secretaries of State. All responsibility resting on the chief of the administration exclusively, the effect of it is destroyed, without duly consulting the harmony of the system in its constituent parts; while the guarantees for the observance of the laws are also diminished. In the execution of these there must be more zeal, when, to the moral responsibility of ministers, is added that imposed by their office. There will then be a more powerful stimulus to the advancement of the public good. The punishment which might be unfortunately incurred, would not be the cause of greater evils, of considerable tumults, or the origin of revolutions. Responsibility in the individual who is the people's choice will always be illusory, if he do not voluntarily submit thereto, or unless, which is very improbable, he should not possess the means of rendering himself superior to the laws. On the other hand, this responsibility can never be made effective, if the cases are undefined in which it is incurred, and the penalty is not specified.

All observe with astonishment the anomaly of the situation of the executive, invested with a redundancy of power conjointly with extreme weakness. It was found unable to repel foreign invasion, or to repress the acts of sedition, unless strengthened with dictatorial power. The constitution itself, sensible of its own omission, has gone beyond itself by the profusion with which it grants powers (to the executive in certain cases) which it had economized with

jealousy; so that the Government of Colombia is either a miserable source of good, or a destroying torrent.

When has the faculty of judging been carried to such a height in any nation as in Colombia?

Considering the mode in which are constituted the powers of the respective branches of our Government, may it not be said that the functions of the body politic of a nation are reduced to the expression of its will, and to the execution of it? A third superior agent (the judicial power) was added, as if the faculty of deciding the laws in particular cases were not the principal function of the executive. In order that it might not unduly influence the authorities charged with the interpretation of them, these authorities have been rendered quite separate from it, whereas, in their nature they form an integral part of the executive; and, notwithstanding the latter power was charged with the duty of constant vigilance over the prompt and complete administration of justice, this charge was confided to it without providing it with means of ascertaining the occasions on which its intervention might be proper, or declaring the limits of the exercise of such power. Even in the faculty of selecting among proper persons, the power of the executive has been limited.

Not content with this extravagance, we have given, by subsequent laws, to the civil tribunals, an absolute supremacy in military trials, in opposition to the uniform practice of ages, derogatory to the authority which the Constitution gives to the President, and destructive of discipline, which is the basis of a regular army. Subsequent laws, in the judicial part, have only had the effect of extending the right of judging to a point which it never ought to have reached. In consequence of the law on

judicial proceedings, law-suits are become complicated. Everywhere are established new courts of judicature and tribunals of cantons, for the suppression of which the miserable inhabitants, who quarrel and make sacrifices for the benefit of the judges, are become clamorous. Repeatedly have superior courts, composed almost entirely of incompetent persons, decided on the good or bad application of the law. The executive has received most distressing complaints of the venality and injustice of the judges, and has had no power to punish them; it has seen the public treasury become the victim of the ignorance and knavery of the tribunals, without having had it in its power to apply the remedy.

The accumulation of the duties of all the branches of the administration in the hands of the agents of the executive in the several departments, augments their weakness, because the intendants, chiefs of civil order and domestic security, have confided to them the administration of the national revenue, which charge requires many individuals, if only to prevent its deterioration. Notwithstanding this accumulation of duties may appear expedient, is it not so, except as regards the military authority, which, in the maritime departments, ought to be linked with the civil, and the latter relieved from duties connected with the revenue, to the end that each of these branches may perform its duty to the public and to the Government in a satisfactory manner.

The municipalities, which might be useful as councils to the governors of provinces, have scarcely fulfilled their real functions. Some of them have dared to take on themselves the sovereignty which belongs to the nation. Others have fomented sedition, and almost all the new ones have

rather exasperated public feeling than promoted plenty, improvement, and salubrity, in their respective municipalities. Such corporations are not beneficial to the object for which they were intended. They are become odious, from the taxes (municipal) they collect, from the trouble they give to the parties who compose them, and because, in many places, there is not even a possibility of replacing those individuals. What renders them peculiarly prejudicial, is the obligation imposed by them on the citizens, of taking on them an annual magistracy, in which they consume their time and property, often exposing themselves to responsibility, and even committing their honour. The voluntary exile of various individuals from their native homes, to escape the appointment of these vexatious offices, is no rare occurrence; and, if I must declare what is the prevalent opinion, there would be no decree more popular than the one which should reduce municipalities.

There being no law of general police, even the shadow of it does not exist. Hence it results, that the state is a mass of confusion, or, I would rather say, a mystery for the subordinate agents of the executive, who are thrown into relation with all the individuals of the state, who are not manageable without an active and efficient police, which may place each citizen in immediate connexion with the agents of the Government. From this cause result various obstacles to the intendants in carrying into execution the laws and ordinances in the respective branches dependent on them.

Security and repose, the chief objects of the wishes of the citizens, being destroyed, it has been impossible for agriculture to maintain itself, even in the deplorable state

in which it was before. Its ruin has accelerated that of other kinds of industry, demoralized the cottage, and diminished the means of prosperity; all has sunk into the misery of desolation, and in some cantons the citizens have resumed their primitive independence, because, having lost all means of enjoyment, nothing binds them to society, and they are even converted into its enemies. Foreign commerce has suffered equally with that of the interior; I might even say, that it scarcely exists on a sufficient scale to procure to us the objects of indispensable necessity, more particularly so, as the frauds favoured by the laws and the judges, in conjunction with numerous failures, have destroyed all confidence among the members of a profession which is alone founded in credit and good faith. And what commerce can exist without barter and without profits?

Our army was the model of that of America and the glory of liberty; its obedience to the Law, to the Magistrate, and to the General, appeared to belong to the heroic periods of Republican virtue. It covered itself with its arms for want of uniforms—perishing for want, it subsisted itself on the spoils of the enemy—and, void of ambition, it breathed only love of country. Such generous virtues have, in a certain degree, been eclipsed by the new laws passed for its government and protection. In the shocks which have been felt by all society, the soldier has had his share; he no longer possesses anything beyond devotion to the cause he has served, and a salutary respect to his own scars. I have mentioned the fatal influence exercised over military subordination, by having subjected it to civil tribunals, whose doctrines and regulations are destructive of strict discipline, to passive submission, and

to that blind obedience which form the basis of military power, the support of all society. The law, which permits the soldier to marry without permission of Government, has been particularly injurious to the army in the facility of its movements, its force, and its spirit. With great reason it has been prohibited to recruit from among fathers of families. In contravention of this principle, we have made fathers of families of our soldiers. The contempt shown to the chiefs from their subordinate officers, through the channel of the press, has also contributed to the relaxation of discipline. The fact of having declared as arbitrary detention, a correctional punishment, is to establish by military ordinance the rights of man, and to defend anarchy among the military, who are most cruel as well as most tremendous when they become demagogues. Dangerous rivalries between civil and military individuals have been promoted by writings, and by discussions in Congress; no longer considering the military as the liberators of the country, but as the executioners of liberty. Was this the reward due to such painful and sublime sacrifices? Was this the recompense reserved to heroes? The scandal has even reached the height of exciting hatred and rancour among the military of the different provinces, in order that union and force might no longer exist.

I would fain not have to notice the indulgence which has been shown to military offences in this eventful period. Every one of our legislators is sensible of the enormity of this most blameable levity. What army will be in future worthy to defend our sacred rights, if the consequences of crime are to be the reward of it; and if glory ceases to be the attendant of fidelity, of valour, of obedience?

From the year 1821, when we commenced the reform of our system of finance, everything has been experiment; but the last has left us more undeceived than the preceding ones. The want of vigour in the administration, in all and in each of its branches—the general endeavour to elude the payment of the contributions—the notorious dishonesty and neglect on the part of the collectors—the creation of useless *employés*, their miserable pay, and the very laws themselves, have contributed to destroy the finances. It has been thought possible to overcome on some occasion this phalanx of difficulties, by invoking the assistance of the tribunals: but these, under the mask of protectors of innocence, have acquitted the refractory debtor and the accused collector. In other instances the delay and consequences of their decisions have afforded an opportunity to Congress to pass new laws, which have even enervated the action of the Government. Up to this time Congress has not regulated the commissariats, which administer the largest portion of the revenue. Up to this time the Congress has not examined, even once, the disposition of the funds of which the Government is simply the administrator.

The delay in Europe of the person (Mr Hurtado) to whom, by orders issued in 1823, it belongs to give an account of the millions which are owing for the loan contracted in London, and ratified by him—the expulsion of our *Chargé d’Affaires* from Peru, who was negotiating the recovery of the supplies made by us to that Republic; lastly, the distribution and consumption of the national property, have forced us to incur, by numerous inscriptions in the book of the national debt, charges which they might have liquidated. The treasury of Colombia has

at last reached the crisis of not being able to redeem our national honour with the generous foreigner, who has advanced to us his money in reliance of our good faith. The army does not receive one-half of its pay; and, with the exception of the *employés* of the revenue, the rest suffer the greatest misery. Shame stops my pen, and I want the resolution to tell you that the national revenue is bankrupt, and that the Republic is beset by a formidable host of creditors.

In describing the chaos in which we are involved, it has appeared to me almost superfluous to speak to you of our relations with other nations. They were prosperous in proportion as our military glory and the wisdom of our citizens displayed themselves; thus inspiring a confidence that our civil organisation and social happiness would attain the high rank which Providence had pointed out to us. The progress of foreign relations has always depended on the wisdom of the Government, and the concord of the people. No nation has ever rendered itself respected, but from the effects of these advantages; none ever rendered itself respected without union, which gives it strength; and Colombia, in a state of discord, despising its own laws, destroying its own credit—what inducement can it hold out to friendly powers? What security has it of preserving even those friends which it possesses? Retrograding instead of advancing in its civil career, it inspires only scorn. It has already seen itself provoked and insulted by an ally which would not be in existence but for its magnanimity. Your decisions are about to determine whether the friendly powers which have recognized us, repenting of the act, will have to expunge our name from among the nations of the world.

Legislators! Great and arduous is the task which the national will has confided to you. Save yourselves from the compromise in which our fellow-citizens have placed you, by saving Colombia. Cast your penetrating glances into the recondite feelings of the hearts of your constituents. You will there read the prolonged sufferings to which they are a prey; they sigh for security and for repose. A firm, powerful, and just government, is the cry of the country. Behold her standing on the ruins left by despotism, pale with fear, deploring the loss of 500,000 heroes, who have died for her, and from whose blood, sowed in her field, her rights arise.

Yes, legislators! Dead and living, sepulchres and ruins, call on you for guarantees. And I who now, seated at the hearth of a simple citizen, and mixed with the multitude, resume my voice and my right—I who am the last to call for the object of society—I, who have consecrated a religious worship to the country and to liberty, ought not to remain silent at a moment so solemn.

Give us a government under which the laws shall be obeyed, the magistrate respected, and the people free—a government which shall impede the transgression of the general will and the commands of the people.

Consider, legislators! that energy in the public force is the safeguard of individual weakness, the menace which deters the unjust man, and the hope of society. Consider that the corruption of the people arises from the indulgence of the tribunals and from the impunity of crime. Observe, that without force there is no virtue, and that without virtue the Republic perishes. Observe, in short, that anarchy destroys liberty, and that union preserves order.

Legislators! In the name of Colombia, I entreat with endless prayers, that, like the Providence whom you represent, you give us—as the arbiters of our destinies, for the people, for the army, for the judge, and for the magistrate—inexorable laws.

SIMON BOLIVAR.

Bogota, Feb. 29, 1828.



THE END.

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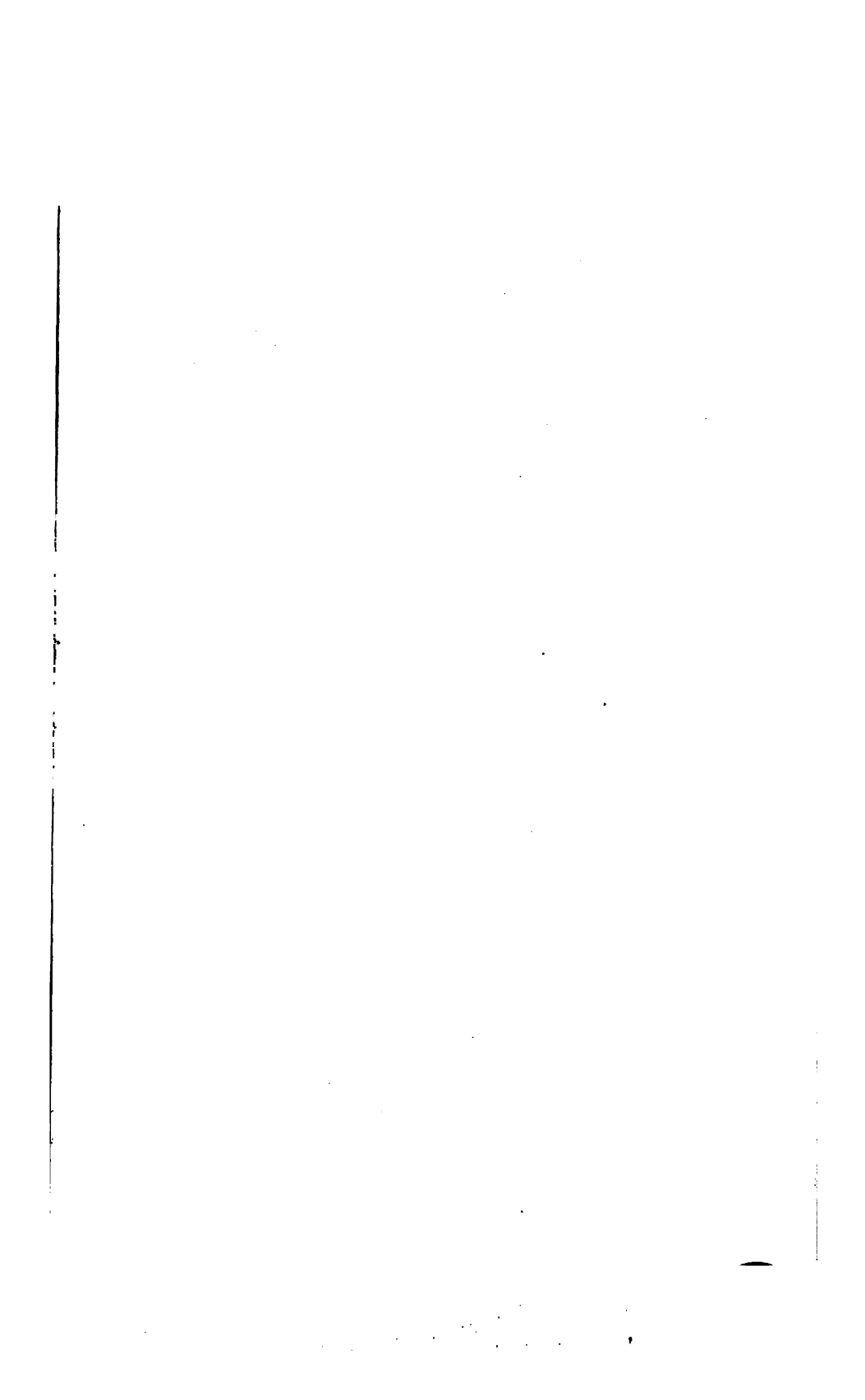
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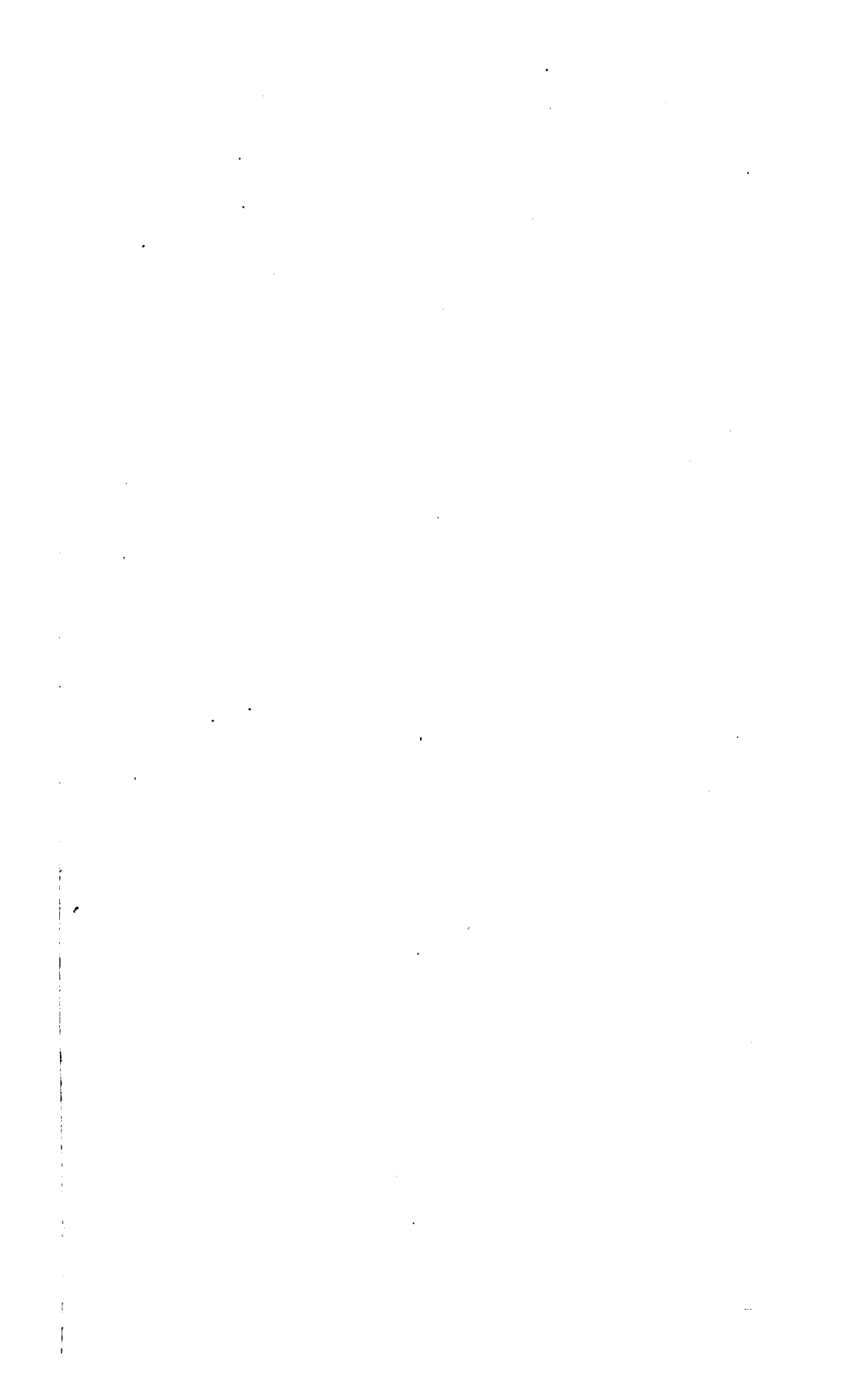
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